

Bhagats

In Aad Guru Granth Sahib

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Bhagats

The Sikh Bhagats (Gurmukhi: ਭਗਤ) refer to holy men who lead a life of spirituality, dedication to God and whose teachings are included in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. They lived between the 12th and 15th centuries.

Throughout the history of India there have been people and thinkers who were dissatisfied with the superstitions and the thousands of the religious vagaries of Hinduism. They gradually evolved a belief in one God and preceded Guru Nanak as does the dawn before sunrise.

The teachings of these Bhagats, whose words and teachings were included in the Holy Granth by Guru Arjan Sahib Ji are given the same prominence in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book, as the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus. Guru Arjan Sahib Ji selected the writings of both Hindus and Muslims with equal impartiality, according to their suitability of his purpose and religious reformation that was Sikhism.

The word "Bhagat" means someone who is an extremely pious holy person, leads humanity towards God and highlights injustices in the practices of the world.

There are 15 Bhagats who are given respect in the Guru Granth Sahib as the Bani of the Six Sikh Gurus.

The Bhagats whose Bani has been included in Guru Granth Sahib belong to the period stretching from twelfth century CE to the seventeenth century. After reading and analysing the Bani of these Bhagats as recorded in Guru Granth Sahib, it becomes amply clear that all of them were the worshippers and votaries of One God. They preached the Oneness of God and exhorted the people to worship Him alone. Initially some Bhagats believed in idol worship and multiple gods but by the time they orated the bani that is incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib, they had realized the oneness of God. Very little is known about the lives of some of these Bhagats.

Guru Arjan Dev ji, the 5th Guru of the Sikhs, included in Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji; the hymns of the Gurus, but also these select few holy man, whose utterances improved the spirito-religious, social & ethical life of the masses. If he included the hymns of Bhagat Pipa, a King, he also included the hymns of Bhagat Namdev, a Calico printer, and Bhagat Ravidas, a Cobbler, in the same way, irrespective of social divides such as caste. This unique approach had never previously been seen, and mankind is indebted to him for this.

Most of the Hindu Bhagats began life as worshippers of idols, but by study and contemplation arrived at a system of monotheism which was appreciated by Guru Arjan. The Muhammadan Bhagats lived in Hindu centres and became largely imbued with Hindu modes of thought, while they at the same time retained their traditional belief in the Divine entity.

Though the spirituality of the Bhagats and certain biographical details are mentioned in both the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Bhai Gurdas ji's Vars, there are no detailed 'Sikh' accounts (compared to those on the lives of the Gurus) of these Bhagats, but accounts of the Bhagats lives are contained in the writings of Nabhaji (the Bhagat Mal), Uddava Chidghan, Mahipati (the Bhakta Lilamirita), Ganesh Dattatre, Maharaja Raghuraj Sinha, Dahyabhai Ghelabhi Pandit, and others in various Indian languages.

In one recension of Bhai Banno's Granth, preserved at Mangat in the Gujarat district of the Punjab, there is included a hymn composed by Mira Bai, Queen of Chitaur. It is believed that Guru Arjan did not give it a place in his collection because the lady lived and died an idolater.

These articles have been collected and copied from various sources and we are very grateful for their work. We acknowledge their contributions.

Bhagat Beni Ji

BENI, BHAGAT is one of the fifteen saints and sufis some of whose compositions have been incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib. Very little is known about his personal life except that he spent most of his time in prayer and contemplation. Nabhāji 's Bhagatmāl, which includes him in its roster of well-known bhaktas or devotees, narrates a popular anecdote about how Beni absorbed in meditation often neglected the household needs and how the Deity himself intervened and physically appeared to help him. Bhāi Gurdās (Vārāñ, X. 14) has referred to Beni's single-pointed meditation in solitude enriched by moments of spiritual edification.

Beni's three hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib are marked by an intense spiritual longing. They also indicate the various paths tried by him in his quest, his practical experience of life and his mastery of religious lore of diverse traditions. His five-stanza Iabda in Sri Raga, in terse and elliptical form, traces the gradual spiritual degeneration of man from the time of his birth to the end. It so closely resembles Guru Nānak's Pahire hymns in the same rāga that Guru Arjan, when compiling the Holy Book, recorded the instruction that Beni's hymn be sung in the same tune as Pahire. In his hymn in Rāga Rāmkali, Beni, using allegorical expressions of the yogis, dwells upon the gradual process leading to the highest spiritual knowledge which is also the ultimate bliss. This hymn, too, has close similarity with several of Guru Nānak's verses in the same measure. It reveals Beni's knowledge of the practices and terminology of hatha yoga as well as his rejection of them in favour of the cultivation of the Divine Name. In the hymn in Rāga Prabhāti, Beni censures in the general tone of the Gurus' bani the hypocrisy of the Brāhman who practises outward piety while harbouring evil in the heart. He adds in conclusion that without the true Guru's instruction way to liberation will not be found.

The devotee Beni chants Guru Nanak's merit who in serenity spiritual bliss enjoys.

Nothing is known about the exact date and place of birth of Bhagat Beni. According to some scholars, he was born in

Asani, but nothing is known about the exact location of this village or town. In spite of all this uncertainty, he can be called a contemporary of Guru Nanak. It seems that Beni lived in this world somewhere between mid-15th century to the mid-16th century. He was a well educated scholar, with a very humble temperament. He was ever ready to serve the true preceptor which provided him real comfort:

Beloved! other than Thee none else have I.

Nothing else do I love;

in Thy grace lies my joy. SGGS-61

Bhagat Beni makes a severe denunciation of the Brahmanical rituals and austerities of Hath Yoga' so that common man learns of the real motive of true religion i.e. cultivation of the Divine Name. He has three hymns on this subject included in the Guru Granth Sahib under Siri Raag (P.93), Rarnkali (974) and Prabhati (1351) musical measures. In these hymns he has severely denounced in an apt and cryptic tone the ritual formalism and advised us to ever remember the True Lord. In his hymn in Ramkali measure, beginning with "The passage ira, Pingala and Sukhmana, all in one place, at the tenth Door abide" says:

The Master's teaching in mind he bears,

His mind and body to the Lord's devotion dedicating.

By the enlightenment by the Master granted, are crushed demons of evil.

Lord! Beni for devotion to

Thy Name supplicates. SGGS-974

This shows that he, who is fully absorbed in the Divine Name, has got rid of his sleep. He who has to overcome his five senses, must love the Lord's Name. The nine doors open only to develop love for and attachment with this manifest world. However, the tenth door is mystical through which one develops unity with God. A proper use of this saves man from failing to the trap of maya. As such, his life is not wasted, and he remains united to his object. The Divine Light kindles within him the four-pronged lamp, a musical measure which comprises of five instruments begins to play in his mind. Thus, in this hymn, Bhagat Beni lays emphasis on discarding ritualism and on developing unity with the Lord through the feeling of devotion. On an analysis of the language of this hymn, some scholars opine

that Beni has denounced 'the limbs smeared with sandalwood paste and tulsi leaves placed on the forehead yet the heart be like one holding knife in hand (SGGS 1351). Thus, this hymn is said to stand in binary opposition to the Sikh precepts, but the fact is that he makes a categorical statement that the state of mystical unity with the Lord includes the fruits of Yoga practices and pilgrimages.

The hymn included under Prabhati measure paints a true picture of a man caught in a life of rituals and sham. Beni says: " You besmear your body with sandalwood paste and put tulsi leaves on your forehead, but in the hand of your heart you have a sharp dagger. How deceitful you are! still you pretend to have your consciousness fixed on the Lord. You are a prey to agnosticism. In your heart of hearts you have been conspiring either to kill someone or to usurp the property of the other. You dance before your deity so as to please it, but your mind is ever full of wicked designs. Thus, all that you are doing is futile because you are by nature wicked, immoral and impious. No doubt, you wear a rosary of tulsi-beads, a pastemark on your forehead, but all this is a sham because you have not purified yourself from within. Thus all your actions are futile, deceitful and full of wastage, How can the Lord be pleased with such action? What is acceptable to Him is the prayer offered in a humble and devout manner. Therefore the seeker must make a note that:

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All his action are hollow, blind.
Saith Beni : Let man by the Master's guidance
On the Lord meditate.
None without the holy Preceptor
finds the path. SGGS-1351

Guru Arjan Dev has also said that Bhagat Beni attained enlightenment only through the Holy Word.

Bhai Gurdas has also referred to the life of Bhagat Beni in the 14th stanza of his tenth Var. Therein he says that Beni was so close to the Lord that the latter Himself took the form of a king and fulfilled all his material needs

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As we have not been able to locate the exact date, year of Beni's birth we have also failed to ascertain the date/Year and place of his death. However, it remains an accepted fact that he has through his pious and enlightened utterances, set new paths for a devotee to realize the spiritual essence.

Another article on Bhagat Beni Ji

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Principles and ideals

Bhagat Beni makes a severe denunciation of the Hindu rituals and austerities of Hath Yoga' so that common man learns of the real motive of true religion i.e. cultivation of the Divine Name.[1] He has three hymns on this subject included in the Guru Granth Sahib under Siri Raag (P.93), Ramkali (974) and Prabhati (1351) musical measures. In these hymns he has severely denounced in an apt and cryptic tone the ritual formalism and advised us to ever remember the True Lord. In his hymn in Ramkali measure, beginning with The passage ira, Pingala and Sukhmana, all in one place, at the tenth Door abide" says: The Master's teaching in mind he bears, His mind and body to the Lord's devotion dedicating. By the enlightenment by the Master granted, are crushed demons of evil. Lord! Beni for devotion to Thy Name supplicates. SGGS-974

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From the above it appears that Bhagat Beni had completely coalesced himself with the Lord. Bhagats generally have in a way, put the Lord under their spell:

Thou to Thy devotees art compliant - The devotees from Thee have strength SGGGS-962

Bhagat Beni Ji's three hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib are as follows;

Sree Raag, The Word Of Devotee Baynee Jee:
To Be Sung To The Tune Of "Pehray": One Universal
Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:
O man, when you were coiled in the cradle of the womb,
upside-down, you were absorbed in meditation.
You took no pride in your perishable body;
night and day were all the same to you-you lived
unknowing,
in the silence of the void.
Remember the terrible pain and suffering of those days,
now that you have spread out the net of your
consciousness far and wide.
Leaving the womb, you entered this mortal world;
you have forgotten the Lord from your mind. ||1||
Later, you will regret and repent-you fool!
Why are you engrossed in evil-mindedness and
skepticism?
Think of the Lord, or else you shall be led to the City of
Death.
Why are you wandering around, out of control?
||1||Pause||
Gazing upon the tiny bodies of your children,
love has welled up within your heart;
you are proud of them, but you do not understand.
You long for the dignity of a long life,
but your eyes can no longer see anything.
Your light has gone out, and the bird of your mind has
flown away;
you are no longer welcome in your own home and

courtyard.

Says Baynee, listen, O devotee:

who has ever attained liberation after such a death?

||5||

(Guru Granth Sahib - page 93)

Raamkalee, The Word Of Baynee Jee: One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

The energy channels of Ida, Pingala and Shushmanaa: these three dwell in one place.

This is the true place of confluence of the three sacred rivers:

this is where my mind takes its cleansing bath. ||1||

O Saints, the Immaculate Lord dwells there;

how rare are those who go to the Guru, and understand this.

The all-pervading immaculate Lord is there.

||1||Pause||

The lotus is at the forehead, and the jewels surround it.

Within it is the Immaculate Lord, the Master of the three worlds.

The Panch Shabad, the five primal sounds, resound and vibrate their in their purity.

The chauris - the fly brushes wave, and the conch shells blare like thunder.

The Gurmukh tramples the demons underfoot with his spiritual wisdom.

Baynee longs for Your Name, Lord. ||9||1||

(Guru Granth Sahib - page 974)

Prabhaatee, The Word Of Devotee Baynee Jee: One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

You rub your body with sandalwood oil, and place basil leaves on your forehead.

But you hold a knife in the hand of your heart.

You look like a thug;

pretending to meditate,

you pose like a crane.

You try to look like a Vaishnaav,

but the breath of life escapes through your mouth. ||1||
You pray for hours to God the Beautiful.
But your gaze is evil,
and your nights are wasted in conflict. ||1||Pause||
Whoever does not realize the essence of the soul -
all his religious actions are hollow and false.
Says Baynee, as Gurmukh, meditate.
Without the True Guru,
you shall not find the Way. ||5||1||
(Guru Granth Sahib - page 1351)

Mention of Bhagat Beni by the Gurus
Guru Maharaj refers to Beni within his own Bani thus:
"The Guru blessed Baynee with His Divine Illumination.
O my mind, you too must be the Lord's slave. ||5||"
(Guru Granth Sahib - page 1192)

and again:
"The devotee Baynee sings His Praises; He intuitively
enjoys the ecstasy of the soul. He is the Master of Yoga and
meditation, and the spiritual wisdom of the Guru; He knows none
other except God."(Guru Granth Sahib - page 1390)

Bhagat Bhikhan Ji



BHIKHAN (1480-1573), a medieval Indian saint two of whose hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. There are in fact two saints of that time sharing the same name— Bhakta Bhikhan and Bhikhan the Sufi. Bhakta Bhikhan was a devotee in the tradition of Ravidās and Dhannā. He was born at Kakori near Lucknow in present day Uttar Pardesh state. His hymns in the Guru Granth Sāhib reflect his dedication to the Name of Hari (God) which he describes as "cure for all ills of the world." Bhagat Bhikhan was the most learnt of the learned men of the time of Emperor Akbar. For many years, he was engaged in teaching and instructing the people. He stated that this spiritual succession was from Mir Saiyid Ibrahim of Irij. He left several children who were adorned with piety, wisdom, knowledge and virtue. The hymns of Bhagat Bhikan ji resemble those of Sheikh Farid

Medicine of the Name Divine in the mouth he pours and yama's (demon) noose snaps. In the Sikh thought, householder's life enjoys a place of prominence because only a householder can aspire to live with others in a spirit of humility, mutual understanding, cooperation and coexistence. The feeling of fraternity is also connected with the house holder's life, and as a result of it the house holder's life has been accepted as the ideal way to realize the ideal of service and remembrance of the Divine. All the contributors to the Guru Granth Sahib advocated

this point of view, and bhagat Nizamuddin Bhikhan is one of these contributors.

Bhikhan belonged to the Lucknow region in the Uttar Pradesh. He was born in AD 1480 in Kakeri town. He was the disciple of Syed Pir Ibrahim from whom he learnt the lesson in spiritual and moral values.

Bhikhan, a medieval Indian Sufi saint (A monastic sect of Muslims), lived a very simple life guided by pious and high thinking. Bidauni, an historian contemporary of emperor Akbar, writes of Bhikhan that he was the greatest among scholars, but in spite of this he used to call himself Kari, i.e., a student or learner. Such a humble pseudonym (assumed name) reflects the humility of his heart. On the whole, the life of Bhikhan was the life of an ideal house holder. Being a great scholar and intellectual, Bhikhan's fame spread far and wide. Soon he came under the influence of Bhakti movement and thus became a bitter critic of futile superstitions and formalism. Religious label was no more of any importance for him. He devoted himself completely to the One Lord. To him, Divine Name was the Panacea for all human maladies. Thus, he came to develop a deep faith and devotion in the Absolute One. He was strongly against retaining difference in one's profession and practice. According to him, one who has to reach the Divine Portal must drink the nectar of Divine Name. Following is the complete hymn in this context

In the old age are the eyes flowing with water,
the body enfeebled,
The hair turned grey,
The throat choked, uttering not a word
What power has man now? (1)
Divine King, Lord! turn-you his physician now:
Save your devotees (1 Pause)
The forehead with ache is burning,
the heart throbbing with pain :
Such is the torment that knows no remedy.(2)
The Name Divine is holy amrita-Water-
this the whole world's remedy,
Prayeth Bhikhan, servant of God:
By the grace of the Master
The door of liberation may I attain! (3) (1)

Two hymns of Bhikhan are included in the Guru Granth Sahib on Page 659. The essence of these hymns is that it is man's deeds that cause him suffering and discontentment. Caught in the web of Maya (wealth) and love for his body, man is engaged in adding patches like mending the shoe. He can secure liberation from such a situation only if God bestows His grace on him. Then the path to liberation will become open to him. Divine grace is certainly bestowed on him provided he remembers the Lord-Curer of all ills of the world.

In his second hymn which begins by calling Name a priceless jewel, Bhikhan describes the effect of Naam-Simran (remembrance of Divine Name) on man's body, soul and mind. The taste of Name is indescribable, says Bhikhan, just as a dumb man cannot explain the taste of sweets. Reciting His Name provides comfort and joy to the tongue, and remembering Him is comforting for the mind. Bhikhan says that his eyes have experienced a strange coolth by remembering the Lord: now whichever direction he looks to, he perceives the Almighty Lord. This Hymn, reads as follows:

The invaluable jewel of the
holy Name in reward for good deeds have I attained.
By innumerable devices in my heart have I lodged it
Yet this jewel concealed may not be. (1)
Beyond expression are merits of the Lord,
As taste of sweets for the dumb. (1 pause)
In the tongue's utterance,
the ears listening to the Name,
The mind's contemplation, lies joy.
Saith Bhikhan : Both my eyes now are content:
Wherever I look, Him I behold.-(2)-(2) SGGS-659

In both these hymns is found expressed the multi-faceted admiration of Name. The essence of his faith in the significance of Name is identical with the thought expressed in the following verse of the Gurus:

Of those not cherishing the Lord in heart Is all doing
tasteless. SGGS-1336

Some scholars are under the mistaken belief that these two hymns as included in the Scripture in the name of Bhikhan are in fact by Syed Bhikhan Shah, a holy-man who spent most of his time in the village of Ghuram, near Patiala. A tomb also stands erected there in his memory. Pir Bhikhan Shah of Ghuram had been a contemporary of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. As the tradition goes, Bhikhan Shah was performing his Namaz (Muslim prayer) facing west when he learnt of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh, and on learning this he immediately turned eastward (towards Patna) to pay obeisance to the newly born Guru.

No doubt, Pir Bhikhan Shah was a sufi saint of high spiritual merit, but none of his verses is included in the Sikh Scripture. The holy-man whose hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib has been Bhagat Bhikhan who was born at Kakeri in Uttar Pradesh and about whom it is said that although he was Bhikhan by name yet he had the heart of an emperor. Eulogy of God was his profession. He had complete control over his senses, and remained ever absorbed in Divine Name.

Bhagat Bhikhan breathed his last in 1631 Bikrami (1574-A.D.), the time when Guru Ram Das occupied the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak.

Another Article on Bhagat Bhikhan

Bhagat Bhikhan (1480-1573) was a medieval Indian holy man whose two hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. Bhagat Bhikhan was the most learnt of the learned men of the time of Emperor Akbar. He lived a very simple life, A married man and householder, he was held in high repute for his piety and learning, guided by pious and high thinking. Bhagat Bhikhan breathed his last in 1631 Bikrami (1574-A.D.), the time when Guru Ram Das occupied the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak. The common and well known belief is that Bhikhan was a Sufi saint of Lucknow.

Who was he?

Like other Bhagats knowledge of his early life is limited. There's lots of confusion about his identity, religion and birth place. There were two saints of that time with the name Bhikhan - Saint Bhikhan(Hindu) and Sheikh Bhikhan(Muslim). Even Bhagat Bhikhan is linked with three places by historians; Kakori (Lucknow), Pakori (UP) and Punjab. It is not sure whether he was musalmaan or hindu, but popular belief is that he was sheikh of Kakori (UP) and was Sufi.

Views

1) Acc. to Macauliffe, Bhagat bhikhan was a Muslim Sheikh, a married man of akbar's times. In his book, The Sikh Religion, he wrote that Bhikhan belonged to Kakori (UP). He died during the early years of akbar's regime. He also included that when Muzaffar Khan revolted against akbar he camped near saint bhikhans grave. Badyuni also mentioned one more saint called Bhikhan Vasvani, which Macaliffe thinks was the same person. He was a nuyayi of Kabir. But still he is confused that it may be some other Bhikhan too.

2) A Persian Writer Badyuni relates that Bhagat Bhikan belonged to Kakori (UP) and was the most learned man of his times. He was learned in Dharam Shashtras and was a pious person. He knew whole qur'an sharif zubani. He preached Quran Sharif. He was disciple of Mir Sayyed Ibrahim. A Sufi, he did not tell people about secrets of god openly but use to tell to devotees and seekers. He also said that he was a prominent sufi who was against music. He left behind several children who were adorned with piety, wisdom, knowledge and virtue. He preached that one should read Adhyatmik granths only. Sheikh Sahib died in 921 Hijri i.e 1573 - 74. Badyuni also mentioned one more saint called Bhikhan Vasvani.

3) Acc. to Pundit narayan Singh, He was a Hindu Saint of Kayisath caste and was born during 1473 in Town pakoi in Lakhnow District. He was 90 of age. Parshuram Chaturvedi also thinks that he was vaishnav saint. Pundit narayan Singh said he was born in Pakoi. (It seems that the Lucknow word kakori, became pakoi when it reached the Punjab.)

4) Bhai Kanh Singh Nabha mentioned only a vague history of Bhagat Bhikhan, calling him a sadhu and sufi faqir. He believes that he died in 1631, which would mean that he died at the age of 101, but he didn't mention that he was same man as the-kakori sheikh bhikhan?

5) Acc to Nirmal Dass's, Songs of the saints from the Adi Granth, Bhikhan was a disciple of Kabir, which makes the largely Hindu overtone words of his rhymes, the atmosphere of these rhymes are not islamic, however there are many saints who are claimed by different religions, such as Baba Farid, Kabir and Madho Lal Hussain, to mention only a few.

6) Prof. Sahib Singh says that Bhagat Bhikhan was neither a Muslim nor a Sufi.

7) Sardar Joginder Singh says that Bhagat Bhikhan was a Vaishnav Sant.

8) Acc. to Dr. Dharmpal Singhal, he was related to punjab as his bani shabdavali is the same as one by guru Nanak, he suspects that Bhikhan ji was a sishya of the Guru, who may have even met Guru Nanak Sahib. With his style of bani so similar to Guru Ji's, he believes that it is wrong to think that bhikhan was from kakori and how could he be a sufi faqir and dislike music. Acc. to him he was prabhavit from gurus bani and have same veechar as they had and even used a theth punjabi muhavra in bani "Doye nain santokhe", Veechar and Language is same as gurus. In Guru Granth Sahib the Bani of Bhagat Bhikhan shows him the lover of RAM's name but acc. to Badyuni he was a muslim, perhaps he was a sufi but as sufi he using ram name is not seems to true, but this can't be impossible. Acc to the Stanzas of Guru Granth sahib, Saint Bhikhan have very good hindi using idioms. He have delicate flavour in his poem. which makes us feel that he was hindi speaking person. Other then guru granth sahib there is one more poem which is written in Sarbangi Granth on page 138 which is equal to guru granth sahib poems if we consider the language. In that stanza Mukand, word is used for god, who is emancipater, there's no word like allah or any other which gives clue that Bhagat bhikhan was a sufi. The shabdavali used in these lines gives a itution that he was some

Vaishnav Saint, Stress Sangat and Mukti makes the indian bhav so it's difficult to call him a sufi. It is also written that his guru was Sayyed Meer Ibarhim, but if it was ramanand or some other indian saint then we could declare him one, but as his guru was different so it feels it was not Sheikh Bhikhan. Acc. to this his nature is calm and pure, vaishnav style of bhagti, was dhaarni of saadh sangat, daya and khima. He use Braj Language no Sandukhrhi hindi. Use idioms but very komal pardhan. His bani have significance of name and ahima of guru. and ustat of Ram, Banvari, Murari and Mukand. His stanzas show ihe was pious bhagat. Dr. Dharampal Singhal's claim that he was related to Punjab may be questionable, as it is well known that Guru Arjun Dev ji changed the wording of many Bhagats into local languages so that sikhs would be able to understand them. Perhaps, he even had to use Panjabi synonyms to make Bhagat Bhikhan's Bani understandable?

9) Sardar Lakhwinderpal Singh Kumkulan, stated in an article, that Bhagat ji was not a muslim, as the wordings of his bani gives no clue that he was a sheikh, as no urdu words are used in his shabad, while Hindu words such as - nain, neer khina, kanth, mukand, banvari, ramrai are prevalent; moreover if he was a sheikh then why didn't Guru Nanak ji preface his name with the word sheikh, as he did with Sheikh Farid.

Claims that Bhagat Bhikhan was Pir Bhikhan Shah of Ghuram

Some scholars are under the mistaken belief that the two hymns included in the Scripture in the name of Bhikhan are in fact by [Sayyed Bhikhan Shah]], a holy-man who spent most of his time in the village of Ghuram, near Patiala, but they forget that he was a contemporary of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, who (as the tradition goes) was about to perform Naamaz (Muslim prayer) facing Makkah, but when he sensed of the birth of Gobind Rai, he immediately turned eastward towards Patna(the city where Guru Gobind Singh was born) to pay his obeisance. Today a monument has been erected in Ghuram in honour of Pir Bhikhan Shah. No doubt, Pir Bhikhan Shah was a sufi saint of high spiritual merit, but none of his verses are included in the Sikh Scripture.

Bhagat Dhanna Ji



Bhagat Dhanna Ji was a Sikh Bhagat born in Dhuan village in Tantr state, Rajasthan, present day North West India in about 1415. From his very childhood, Bhagat Dhanna Ji was very simple, hardworking and straightforward. He always enjoyed the company of saints and scholars. Bhagat Dhanna Ji is shown here serving the needy as well as holy men with devotion regarding them ALL as the embodiment of God. He became a follower of Bhagat Ramanand. In the beginning he was an idol worshipper but at some point realized the futility of idol worship and became a worshipper of Nirgun Brahm. Three [Shabad]s of Bhagat Ji's Bani are included in the SGGS on pages 487, 488 and 695. Bhagat ji was a farmer by trade and was born into a Hindu family. From his early childhood, he was a very simple, hardworking and straightforward person. He enjoyed the company of saints and scholars. He also spent time serving the needy and holy men with dedication and devotion.

Guru Arjan dev ji say the following about Bhagat Dhanna Ji on

- SGGS page 488: "Hearing this, Dhanna the Jaat applied himself to devotional worship. The Lord of the Universe met him personally; Dhanna was so very blessed. ||4||2||"
- SGGS Page 835: "Naam Dayv, Jai Dayv, Kabeer, Trilochan and Ravi Daas the low-caste leather-worker, blessed Dhanna

and Sain; all those who joined the humble Saadh Sangat, met the Merciful Lord. ||7||”

- SGGS Page 995: “O my mind, chant the Naam, the Name of the Lord, and cross over. Dhanna the farmer, and Balmik the highway robber, became Gurmukh, and crossed over. ||1||Pause||”
- SGGS Page 1192: “Dhanna served the Lord, with the innocence of a child. Meeting with the Guru, Trilochan attained the perfection of the Siddhas. The Guru blessed Baynee with His Divine Illumination. O my mind, you too must be the Lord`s slave. ||5||”



The Bhakti movement in India was at its peak in the 14th and 15th centuries. Several men of God who belonged by birth to poor families and the so-called low castes earned spiritual heights and thus gained fame far and wide. Many more from such lower state of society emulated them in pursuit of the divine ideal. Dhanna was also one such devotee of God. Guru Arjan Dev has said that Dhanna heard of the fame of Namdev, saw for himself the spiritual grandeur of Kabir, learnt of the uplifted spiritual and moral position of Ravidas and experienced Sain's mystical oneness with the Lord. All this inspired in Dhanna's heart a deep felt urge to realize God.

Bhagat Dhanna was born in a poor Jat (farmer) family in 1415 AD in the village of Dhuan in the Tonk region of Rajputana. He

was one of such devotees as remain ever absorbed in God even when they are physically occupied in various jobs to earn their livelihood. It was this deep devotion of Dhanna that ultimately enabled him to have a glimpse of the Timeless Lord even in a stone. Dhanna was a simple-hearted, and noble person, and he took seriously the advice of a Brahmin to consider the stone, Lord Himself. He was asked by the Brahmin to offer the stone (or the Lord in the stone) sacramental food. When Dhanna found that the Lord in the stone was not accepting the food offered by him, he declared that he himself would not touch the food and remain on fast as long as the Lord did not accept his offer. Bhai Gurdas has narrated (Varan, X.1 3) the entire episode in a beautiful verse.

He says;

Brahmin used to worship idols
And Dhanna went out to graze cows;
When Dhanna saw this all
He put queries to Brahmin who said: '
We who serves the Lord Gets fulfilled all desires of his
heart;
Dhanna made supplication to him:
'Give me one (Idol) if it pleases thee
Brahmin wrapped a stone in cloth
And gave it to Dhanna to get rid of him,
Dhanna first bathed the stone,
Then offered food and butter-milk;
He prayed with folded hands, and
Prostrated to persuade it accept the offer;
I will not eat a morsel-
Food I relish not if Thou art annoyed.'
God appeared before the Dhanna,
Accepted the offering he made;
Innocent love of Dhanna
Thus united him into the Lord.

A hymn by Guru Arjan Dev included in the Guru Granth Sahib on page 487 narrates the same incident. The concluding two verses of this hymn are as follows;

Listening to such happenings,
the poor Jat Dhanna too in devotion engaged.
The Lord to him manifested Himself--
Such was Dhanna's good fortune. SGGS-488

The determination and commitment of the innocent and pious Dhanna made even the Lord yield, and He had to take the form of Thakur, drink and eat what Dhanna had offered Him. Thus did Dhanna's unwavering determination win, and in consequence of this achievement he felt deeply committed to God. How easy it has been to win the pleasure of God with one's innocence and simple piety. The following verse from the Sikh Scripture aptly applies to Dhanna;

In innocent spontaneous devotion
comes meeting with the Lord. SGGS-324

There are three hymns of Dhanna in the Sikh Scripture under Asa and Dhanasari measures. In his hymns included at page 487, he says : "O man, you have wasted several lives in duality from God. Body, wealth and material gains are ephemeral. The poisonous effect of covetousness and indulgence in passions have separated man from the Creator-Lord. It is a matter of deep regret that human mind still feels attracted towards such sinful passions. He is so engrossed in realizing material comfort and gains that he fails to experience the importance of Naam-simran (Recitation of holy name). Thus, a man must endeavour to gather the wealth of Divine Name because only such a wealth can help in his spiritual amelioration." In the other hymn (page 488), he exhorts human beings to have unwavering faith in and devotion to God because only these feelings can become a medium for their union with God. Dhanna expresses his unbounded faith in God with the help of some examples. He tells us that God is omniscient. He brings up the smallest insects even inside the rocks. He provides nourishment to the embryo in the mother's womb. Whatsoever happens in this universe is in His will. Man should, therefore, have no fear. He must have love for and awe of God. He is our nourisher, our Patron Father. That is why Dhanna offers prayer (aarti) in eulogy of the Lord and at the same time requests Him that a householder has numerous needs to be fulfilled ; he prays to God for the fulfilment of these needs. He demands a house to live in, a wife to perpetuate the lineage, a mare of good breed to ride on, and pulses, ghee, flour, salt, pepper, etc. to fill one's belly. A hymn by Dhanna under Dhanasari measure on this subject reads as under:

Lord! Thy servant am I in affliction.

Those that to Thee are devoted,
Thou their objectives dost fulfil (Pause)
I beg for lentils, flour and some ghee,
Whereby may my heart be delighted.
Seek I also shoes and good clothing,
And grain grown over well-ploughed Land.
A cow and a buffalo in milk I seek,
As also a good Arab mare.
Thy Servant Dhanna then begs also for a wife,
a good house keeper. SGGs-695

No man of God other than Dhanna or Kabir has ever supplicated to God with such emphasis for the fulfilment of his material needs. They are fully justified in saying that one can't concentrate on God with empty stomach because the fire of hunger adversely affects both the body and soul. In case one feels unable to satiate one's hunger with food morning and evening even after a day of hard labour, Kabir in such a situation is prepared even to give back to God the rosary he uses for remembrance of His Name.

As we have already said, Dhanna had firm and unswerving faith in the omnipotence of God. Dhanna says that man must have full faith in Him. It will be of interest to relate here an incident to reiterate such a faith. It is said that Prophet Moses had deep love for God, and he used to climb up the Mount and converse with God. Once, two gentlemen met Moses. One of those gentlemen ever remained engaged in Divine remembrance and spent his life in righteous and honest manner. The other fellow was given to wine, women and such other vices of passion. Because of such habits he had either no time or inclination towards singing eulogies of God. Both of these said to Moses that he has been meeting and conversing with God quite often and that he has been deeply in love with Him. He should therefore enquire from God in their behalf, whether they would be able to swim across the world ocean. Moses acceded to their request and agreed to put this question to God and also to report back the answer that God gave to their question. However, in their heart of hearts both of them seemed to know the answer. The person given to devotion and righteous labour was fully satisfied that the answer would be in his favour. On the other hand he

who was given to wine and women also knew the answer fully well himself. Still both of them waited for answer from Moses.

At last Moses met them after a few days and told them that he had put their question to God. Both expressed equal keenness to know the answer God gave him. Moses told that as he asked God if person with noble deeds would go to heaven, He made no reply. When Moses sought the same information about the other man, God told him that a few days ago a heavily loaded camel was going on its way, and it was in excitement. God further told that he saw its mischief (wickedness), got hold of a needle and made the camel pass through its eye. That made the camel quite calm. That is what God said in reply to that question and nothing more.

Moses told them that on hearing such a vague answer he began to reflect. He wondered how could such a huge beast pass through the eye of such a small needle. But God had told him only this much and spoke nothing beyond that. On hearing this, the devout person asked Moses that he was right when he wondered as to how can such a huge camel pass through the eye of a needle : it seems obviously impossible. Listening to this the other fellow made an instant reply saying that this can be. Nothing is impossible for God. He can do whatsoever He wishes none can stop Him. Camel is a small thing, and He can, if He so desires, pass a huge mountain through the eye of the needle. This is my firm faith. On hearing this, Moses and the other fellow came to their senses- if He is God, He is capable of doing anything He wishes. We know of the indescribable power of God but still seem to disbelieve it. And this man given to the vices of wine and women knows nothing about Him but still has such a firm faith in His omnipotence. He believes that God is capable of doing anything. This incident made them aware that each and everybody can win acceptance in the Divine court provided he or she has deep faith in Him. God will not be far away then.

From the information provided in the preceding pages about Dhanna, it becomes clear that Dhanna was a dear son of God who can ask his Father without any hesitation and with a sort of claim for the fulfilment of his needs. In fact he knows how to get even the greatest of his needs fulfilled that is perhaps the reason which prompts Mira Bai to say that Dhanna can grow

the corn without sowing the seed. We come across some very significant references at several places to the effect that the bhagats are the dearest sons of God. It is also perhaps because of the unique miracles and deep faith of such men of God that Guru Arjan says that such devotees (Bhagats) have made the Lord a family man because they are His loving children. Guru Arjan Dev's verse on this subject runs as follows:

Blessed is the birth of the servant of God,
Who the Lord, Rewarder of deeds,
With progeny has furnished.
Along with him all assembled groups attain liberation,
As saith Nanak: the Supreme Being,
Perfection incarnate, has he realized SGG-532

The life of ignorant Jat Dhanna (as he himself describes himself as such) was decorated with the flowers of piety, discourses of love, nobility of truth, commitment of faith and the service of the Lord rendered with heart. He lived a life of 60 years and died in 1475 A.D. Some historians believe that Dhanna and Guru Nanak Dev met each other at Dhanna during the latter's first preaching odyssey, but the years do not seem to support this contention. It is now a historically accepted fact that Guru Nanak's first odyssey began in 1501 AD whereas Dhanna breathed his last in 1475.

Mankind can easily achieve the aim of God-realization provided it follows the footprints of Dhanna. The life of Dhanna is a clear example in this context, and it serves as a good and worthy guide. Dhanna has been the pride of India's religious history because of his unique spiritual merit.

Another Article on Bhagat Dhanna

Bhagat Dhanna (Gurmukhi: ਭਗਤ ਧੰਨਾ) was a devotee and Gurmukh, born in village of Dhuan Kalan in 1415, on April 20th near Deoli city, in the Tonk district, Rajasthan, present day North West India. Three Shabads of Bhagat ji's Bani are included in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib on Ang's 487, 488 and 695.

Though born in a Jatt hindu family of Dhaliwal Clan, he rejected all hindu traditions and rituals, when he came in contact

with Gurmukhs, he found God from his heart. He choose to control his desires and to have the only one desire for God. He was a farmer by profession. The 5th Nanak said Dhanna served God, with the innocence of a child. He followed command of God after realising the true way of God.

Sikhs admire and follow the teachings of Dhanna, as in Gurmat, Kabir, Nanak, Ravidas, Bhatts all are same and all are treated as Gurus - "spiritual guides". Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib which include the teaching of many who had the same thoughts and views about Waheguru. The creator himself spoke through his Bhagat's, revealing the holy Shabad. Life

Bhagat ji was born in house of Bhai Panna from Mai Reva in village Dhuan Kalan Tonk District of Rajasthan in April 1415. He was the only son in his family. He was born into a farmer family (Jatt) and he was not educated in any school or college. In the beginning he was an idol worshipper; but after that he became a "Param Sant" (pure saint). He earned his livelihood by farming (Kheti). From his early childhood, he was a very simple, hard-working and straightforward person. He enjoyed the company of saints and scholars.

He also spent time serving the needy and holy men with dedication and devotion. When he grew up, after he stopped worshipping idols, he went to Kashi and he got the initiation from Swami Ramananda. He was an illiterate; but in the end he achieved high status and became a Perfect Saint.

There is a Gurdwara of Saint Dhanna Bhagat in village Duan Kalan. where he was born, in 1415, Medieval India.

Guru Arjan Sahib Ji on Dhanna

Guru Arjan admires Bhagat Dhanna for his dedication towards God. According to him, Dhanna was not initially a Gurmukh but when he met company of saints where only truth is discussed; where knowledge of only the one is given; he became a Gurmukh, "Guru-guided". He worshipped God and

found God within his heart. He served God with innocence like a child as he was a very humble person. Guru Arjan Sahib said that like Bhagat Dhanna his too wants his mind to also become God's slave. Following are lines which Guru Arjan Sahib has said about Bhagat Dhanna ji in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

"Hearing this, Dhanna the Jaat applied himself to devotional worship. God met him personally; Dhanna was so very blessed. ||4||2||"

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 488

"Naam Dayv, Jai Dayv, Kabeer, Trilochan and Ravi Daas the low-caste leather-worker, blessed Dhanna and Sain; all those who joined the humble Saadh Sangat, met Merciful God. ||7||"

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 835

"O my mind, chant the Naam, the Name of God, and cross over. Dhanna the farmer, and Balmik the highway robber, became Gurmukh, and crossed over.

||1||Pause||"

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 995

"Dhanna served God, with the innocence of a child. Meeting with the Guru, Trilochan attained the perfection of the Siddhas. The Guru blessed Baynee with His Divine Illumination. O my mind, you too must be God`s slave.

||5||"

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 1192

Sakhi of Bhagat Dhanna

Bhagat Dhanna Ji was a simple Indian farmer who worked hard on his farm all day tending his crops. He used to go past the house of a clever pundit everyday on the way to his work on the farm.

Dhanna Ji used to listen to the pundit singing religious verses, as he carried out various ritualistic acts, which were beyond the understanding of this simple Jatt (farmer). He found these acts intriguing but never asked the religious man about any of the things that he had observed in the many years that he had gone past the pundit's house.

One day, Bhai Dhanna ji was passing the pundit's house and noticed that the religious man was feeding his Thakur - a stone

idol. Bhai Dhanna ji was quite puzzled by what he was observing. On this occasion as he had some free time, so he went and asked the pundit. Dhanna Ji asked "pundit Ji, What are you doing?" The pundit was very hungry and wanted to get this feeding over as soon as possible and really wasn't in a mood for Bhai Dhanna ji's simple inquiries. He replied, "Oh, nothing, I am just feeding my Thakur. Now if you will excuse me..."

Bhai Dhanna ji found that incredibly funny, "What is the use of feeding a stone?"

pundit, "This is not a stone, it is God. It's Thakur!"

Dhanna, "Really? What happens if you feed the Stone... I mean, what happens when you feed the Thakur?"

pundit: "The Thakur gives you everything!! If you can please God, you will get everything. Now, I really must ask you to leave...I have a lot to do"

Bhai Dhanna ji liked this idea of giving a little food to this small God and getting back everything. So Bhai Dhanna ji asked the pundit if he could also have a Thakur.

At this time, the pundit's stomach was audibly complaining about lack of food. So he hastily picked up the nearest stone off the ground and said, "Here. First feed Thakur, then you eat. Understood! Goodbye." Saying that the pundit dived into the food left over by Thakur. "Lovely I really could not have waited any longer!"

Bhai Dhanna ji held the stone closely to his chest and hurried home. As soon as Bhai Dhanna ji got home, he first carefully and lovingly washed the stone. Having bathed the Thakur, Dhanna then cooked the best meal he knew - Saag and Makkee di Roti - for dinner. He placed it in front of Thakur and said, "Here Thakur ji, please eat this food, I have made it lovingly for you. Afterwards, I want to discuss many things with you. I need a new cow for example, and a few other simple requests - but for now, please eat."

Saying that Bhai Dhanna ji sat in front of Thakur and waited. And waited. And waited. After a while, Bhai Dhanna ji said, "Look Thakur, I really have no time for your play. Come and eat at once! I have many things to do."

After several hours, Bhai Dhanna ji thought perhaps Thakur ji was annoyed at him – May be he has done something wrong. So Bhai Dhanna ji tried to persuade Thakur ji to forgive him: "Look here Thakur, I haven't eaten in a while. Now it is entirely possible that I have done something to annoy you but believe you me, we can discuss this much better after this Saag and Makkee dee Roti is in our stomachs." Still nothing happened. Slowly the night deepened. It was now pitch dark outside and the Thakur was showing no signs of eating the delicious food.

Bhai Dhanna ji was now getting angry and said, "Look Thakur, I have one nerve left and you are dancing on it. Either eat your food or I will....", Bhai Dhanna ji couldn't really think of anything else to say so he bust out in anger. Still nothing happened! The angry outburst had no effect on the Thakur.

Pretty soon, Danna ji could see light skies in the East and soon it was going to become daylight. Bhai Dhanna ji felt quite disoriented and confused. Sometimes Bhai Dhanna ji would curse the Thakur, sometimes Bhai Dhanna ji would hug the Thakur and sometimes Bhai Dhanna ji would start crying.

Two long and hungry nights and days passed in this manner. Dhanna ji tried every way to convince the Thakur to take the food. He tried with all the tricks that he knew, with all the love that he could muster, with all the pleadings that he knew, with all the anger – But nothing appeared to work. Dhanna Ji was a stubborn farmer but he was failing miserably here. However, his conviction had not faltered. He kept working on his begging and pleadings.

Then at amrit vela (early dawn) on the third day, when Dhanna ji was too weak to curse any more, Waheguru decided to intervene. To stop Dhanna from going mad, Waheguru gave Bhai Danna a vision in the form of a young man. It was the most beautiful body of a young man. Dhanna ji lost all his anger and just stared at the young man.

Speaking through the young man Waheguru said, "Dhanna ji, Sorry, I am late..." Dhanna ji interrupted and said, "I will warm up the food. Thakur Ji you must eat the food – You

must also be very hungry" Dhanna Ji fed the young man and ate the remaining food himself after having stayed hungry for over 2 days.

After, eating the food, Dhanna Ji said to Waheguru, "As I said to you two days ago, I have a few things to discuss with you. First there is the work of the farm and then..."

Bhai Dhanna ji fell head over heels in love with the young man (through whom God spoke to him). He couldn't resist being with the young man. They spent the next few days literally arm in arm. Even at night, Bhai Dhanna ji would hold Waheguru 's hand and listen to Waheguru's songs - Waheguru sang a lot - and would drift off to sleep. A week later, the pundit was passing Bhai Dhanna ji's hut. Bhai Dhanna ji saw him and ran to him and said, "Oh, pundit ji, you are the most wonderful man. I can never thank you enough for giving me that marvellous Thakur..."

pundit, "What you on about??? OK, Oh, yeah, sure, anytime. Look, I am in a hurry. I am going to the big pundit conference ..."

Bhai Dhanna ji: "But please come and drink some lassi (Milk Shake). Thakur ji makes the best lassi."

pundit: "What now? What are you saying? Thakur makes something?"

Bhai Dhanna ji: "Oh yes! It's the best in the world. Just look at him, how handsome he is!"

pundit ji looked and indeed he could see that someone was pushing the cows on the farm. And yet there was nobody to be seen.

pundit ji: "Who is controlling the cows. Who is that?"

Bhai Dhanna ji: "Why, that is Thakur ji, of course. Can't you recognise him. Oh, you should hear him sing...It's out of this world!"

pundit ji was quite intrigued by now. And kept repeatedly asking Bhai Dhanna ji about Thakur. After a while Bhai Dhanna ji realized that pundit could not see Thakur ji. Dhanna ji promised that he would talk to Thakur about this.

The pundit left. Bhai Dhanna ji went to Waheguru and said, "Thakur ji, how come pundit ji can't see you?"

Waheguru: "The pundit really doesn't want to see me. He is more interested in my maid – Maya and he is captivated in it entanglement. He has no real interest in me only in my creation"

Dhanna ji: "But I don't understand. Why can I see you and others cannot? How can one begin to see you?"

Waheguru: "One has to become pure. And in this age, Dhanna ji, the only way to become pure is by reciting Naam."

Dhanna ji: "Naam?"

Waheguru: "Naam is the magic of this age. Even a few minutes of Naam Simran will bring the magic that is needed to see me."

Dhanna ji: "But, I haven't recited Naam. How come I can see you?"

The young man, touched Bhai Dhanna ji 's forehead. Bhai Dhanna ji's surat went inside. Inside he saw that he, Bhai Dhanna ji, had done heavy tapasaya for over many lifetimes. He had stood in water all night and in the hot sun all day. He had hung upside down for several lifetimes. He had been a celibate in one lifetime and a moni (ones who doesn't talk) in another. But he had progressed spiritually very little.

Then in his previous life, he had met an adept Guru who had given him Naam. And by doing Naam Simran for just one lifetime, Bhai Dhanna ji had become pure. Seeing Waheguru ji was the reward for his Naam from previous life.

Bhai Dhanna ji fell at the young man's feet and cried. Saying, "Please forgive this fool, I treated you as an equal..."

The young man ji picked him and held him close, singing songs of comfort, "Bhai Dhanna ji, now the time is right to leave. The way you see me now is the superficial way of meeting me. The real way is inside. Now you must start Naam Simran again and then I will meet you inside."

Saying that the young man vanished into thin air. Bhai Dhanna ji was enlightened now. He restarted his Naam Simran with each breath. Within days, Bhai Dhanna ji had parkash (sighting) of Waheguru ji within his mind and through this enlightenment; we today have the benefit of Dhanna Bani in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

When we bow to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, we are not just acknowledging the advice and lives of our ten Gurus but also the lives and Bani of 15 Sikh Bhagats.

God is within us all and pervades throughout his creation (there is universe beyond universe...Japji Sahib). So if we want vision of God then we need to meditate on his name (he has innumerable names, as told to us by Guru Gobind Singh Ji). It is important to note that God DOES NOT take any form, but for our purpose he can give us a vision in any form. For example, Waheguru was inside the young man as much as he was inside bhai Dhanna but for Bhai Dhanna's experience, God spoke through the young man. Guru Granth Sahib tells us that in Sach Khand, where the light of God dwells, blessed saints merge with God (as Guru Gobind Singh Ji did in his previous incarnation). Therefore when a christian wants to "see God" he may get a vision of Jesus, a Muslim that of Allah.

If you envision God as a radiant light which pervades throughout the universe, then if you are blessed this may be the vision you will see. An important concept in Sikhism is that God does not take form (Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth), he is formless and pervades through his creation.

Background

The Bhakti movement in India was at its peak in the 14th and 15th centuries. Several men of God who belonged by birth to poor families and the so-called low castes earned spiritual heights and thus gained fame far and wide. Many more from such lower state of society emulated them in pursuit of the divine ideal. Dhanna was also one such devotee of God. Guru Arjan Sahib has said that Dhanna heard of the fame of Namdev, saw for himself the spiritual grandeur of Kabir, learnt of the uplifted spiritual and moral position of Ravidas and experienced Sain's mystical oneness with God. All this inspired in Dhanna's heart a deep felt urge to realize God.

Bhagat Dhanna Ji was such a bhagat that he remained ever absorbed in God, even when he was physically occupied in various jobs and earning his livelihood. It was this deep devotion of Dhanna that ultimately enabled him to have a glimpse of the

Timeless God even in a stone. Dhanna was a simple-hearted ,and noble person, and he took the advice of a Brahmin to consider the stone, God Himself. He was asked by the Brahmin to offer the stone (or God in the stone) sacramental food. When Dhanna found that God was not accepting the food offered by him, he declared that he himself would not touch the food and remain on a fast as long as God did not accept his offer. Bhai Gurdas has narrated (Varan, X.1 3) the entire episode in a beautiful verse. He says;

Brahmin used to worship idols
And Dhanna went out to graze cows;
When Dhanna saw this all
He put queries to Brahmin who said: '
We who serve God Gets fulfilled all desires of his heart;
Dhanna made supplication to him:
'Give me one (Idol) if it pleases thee
Brahmin wrapped a stone in cloth
And gave it to Dhanna to get rid of him,
Dhanna first bathed the stone,
Then offered food and butter-milk;
He prayed with folded hands, and
Prostrated to persuade it accept the offer;
I will not eat a morsel-
Food I relish not if Thou art annoyed.'
God appeared before the Dhanna,
Accepted the offering he made;
Innocent love of Dhanna

Thus united him into God.

A hymn by Guru Arjan Sahib included in the Guru Granth Sahib on Ang 487 narrates the same incident. The concluding two verses of this hymn are as follows;

Listening to such happenings,
the poor Jat Dhanna too in devotion engaged.
God to him manifested Himself--
Such was Dhanna's good fortune.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 488

The determination and commitment of the innocent and pious Dhanna made even God yield, and He had to take the form

of Thakur, drink and eat what Dhanna had offered Him. Thus did Dhanna's unwavering determination win, and in consequence of this achievement he felt deeply committed to God. How easy it has been to win the pleasure of God with one's innocence and simple piety.

The following verse from the Sikh Scripture aptly applies to Dhanna;

In innocent spontaneous devotion
comes meeting with God.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 324

There are three hymns of Dhanna in the Sikh Scripture under Asa and Dhanasari measures. In his hymns included at page 487, he says : "O man, you have wasted several lives in duality from God. Body, wealth and material gains are ephemeral. The poisonous effect of covetousness and indulgence in passions have separated man from the Creator-God. It is a matter of deep regret that human mind still feels attracted towards such sinful passions. He is so engrossed in realizing material comfort and gains that he fails to experience the importance of Naam-simran (Recitation of holy name). Thus, a man must endeavour to gather the wealth of Divine Name because only such a wealth can help in his spiritual amelioration." In the other hymn (Ang 488), he exhorts human beings to have unwavering faith in and devotion to God because only these feelings can become a medium for their union with God. Dhanna expresses his unbounded faith in God with the help of some examples. He tells us that God is omniscient. He brings up the smallest insects even inside the rocks. He provides nourishment to the embryo in the mother's womb. Whatever happens in this universe is in His will. Man should, therefore, have no fear. He must have love for and awe of God. He is our nourisher, our Patron Father. That is why Dhanna offers prayer (aarti) in eulogy of God and at the same time requests Him that a householder has numerous needs to be fulfilled ; he prays to God for the fulfilment of these needs. He demands a house to live in, a wife to perpetuate the lineage, a mare of good breed to ride on, and pulses, ghee, flour, salt, pepper, etc. to fill one's belly.

A hymn by Dhanna under Dhanasari measure on this subject reads as under:

God! Thy servant am I in affliction.
Those that to Thee are devoted,
Thou their objectives dost fulfil (Pause)
I beg for lentils, flour and some ghee,
Whereby may my heart be delighted.
Seek I also shoes and good clothing,
And grain grown over well-ploughed Land.
A cow and a buffalo in milk I seek,
As also a good Arab mare.
Thy Servant Dhanna then begs also for a wife,
a good house keeper. SGGs-695

No man of God other than Dhanna or Kabir has ever supplicated to God with such emphasis for the fulfilment of his material needs. They are fully justified in saying that one can't concentrate on God with empty stomach because the fire of hunger adversely affects both the body and soul. In case one feels unable to satiate one's hunger with food morning and evening even after a day of hard labour, Kabir in such a situation is prepared even to give back to God the rosary he uses for remembrance of His Name.

Baba Sheikh Farid Ji



Farid was to Punjabi what Chaucer was to English. He made Punjabi poetry and poetry Punjabi. Later when Adi Granth (Sikh scripture) was compiled by the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Farid's 'slokas' (sacred couplets) were given the place of honour along with those of Kabir, Ramdev and Guru Ravidas.

"Farid return thou good for evil;
In thy heart bear no revenge.
Thus thy body will be free of maladies,
And thy life have all blessings."

Baba Sheikh Farid Ji was a great Sufi saint, very sweet of tongue and who lived an austere life. He asked for only one blessing from God a life of prayer and meditation. His following insight forms the subject of the painting above-

"Sweet are candy, sugar, honey, and buffalo's milk. Yea, sweet are these but sweeter by far is God."

The year was 1398. Timur was returning home after ransacking Delhi -light of mind but laden with gold, trampling

corn, killing men and cattle alike. It was a typical Punjab winter and the air in the fields mingled with the blood of the innocents.

On the banks of the river Sutlej at a place called Pak Pattan, his horses suddenly stopped. The horsement whipped their animals. The stallions started bleeding but refused to move further. There was panic among the soldiers, hysteria among the officers, total confusion in the army. There was consternation and alarm writ large on every face. Not used to such unscheduled halts, the Turk chief leapt forward, roared like a lion and demanded answers.

Nobody replied. He shouted again. Everyone remained totally speechless. At last an old man came forward and said, "Your honour, this place is sanctified".

"By one saint whose ancestors had migrated from Iran to escape death at the hands of your ancestors", the old man replied. Everyone looked at everyone else. The general's hands reached for his sword but before they could go any further, a miracle happened. As goes the legend, a voice came from somewhere and called, "Baba Farid, the King of Kings". Every tongue felt that it had an ear on it. A vision came to the advancing marauder. He felt elated. The armies were ordered to spare the town.

Timur bowed low in the 'Khanqah', heard the Sufi hymns, spent the night in the 'dargah'. He ate the same austere food, which the Devotees ate, slept on the same mat and pledged not to kill any more innocents, only to break the pledge later.

Acknowledged by every literary authority as the first major poet of the Punjabi language, Farid was to Punjabi what Chaucer was to English. He made Punjabi poetry and poetry Punjabi. Later when Adi Granth (Sikh scripture) was compiled by the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Dev, Farid's 'slokas' (sacred couplets) were given the place of honour along with those of Kabir, Ramdev and Guru Ravidas. They all sang in the people's dialect about the glory of India's culture, the greatness of Indian values and the supremacy of Indian thought.

Among the many social and religious movements in India of the last two thousand years, the Bhakti movement of the middle ages from the 13th to the 17th centuries was the most pronounced, as it cut across all distinctions of high and low birth, the learned and the unlettered, men and women and opened the doors of spiritual realization and salvation to one and all. Besides, it provided a base for common socio-religious culture in India.



One great characteristic of the Indian civilization is that more than its kings and warriors and generals, it is the Saints and the Sufis who realized the goals of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The cyclic tales recited by the lute players of ancient India, the songs of the wandering minstrels, the ballads and the 'kathaks' (storytellers) of medieval times provided a framework for the evolution and growth of the composite culture of India. They integrated the diverse elements of Indian society and knit them in a unified cultural necklace. It is these saints and sufis who bestowed a sense of Indianness on Indians down the ages. Baba Farid occupies a very high place in this cultural anthology.

Baba Farid lived in Punjab in the 13th century and composed hymns in Punjabi, the likes of which are yet to be

composed. There was something in his poetry akin to prayer. He spoke of his people in the people's dialect and asked them to use Punjabi for religious purposes. He started a 'silsilah at Pak Pattan and established a mystic organization, a 'Khanqah' (Monastery) on the lines of a European seminary upholding the rule of mind over matter in the ultimate analysis of human affairs.

Baba Sheikh Farid had been in the 12th & 13th centuries, a great intellectual, unique renunciat, perfect ascetic and committed devotee of the Timeless Lord who communicated to the common folk the revealed divine message through the medium of sweet, soothing Punjabi language. Farid lived a householder's life marked with contentment and perseverance. One of the greatest virtues of his life was his love and sympathy for entire mankind. His heart felt pain of oppression perpetuated by the Muslim invaders in the name of religion. He tried to put balm on the hurt psyche of the people through the medium of sweet, soothing words so that the adverse impact caused by excesses of the orthodox Muslims to the image of Islam could be neutralised. Such an act on the part of someone was required for the revival of the feeling of fraternity amongst mankind. The unique humanitarian values of compassion, love, sympathy, mutual understanding and appreciation are clothed in the hymns of Farid as fragrance is in flowers. For his sweet words, sweet ideals and sweet behaviour, Farid became known as an epitome of Sweetness (Shakarganj); his full name was Sheikh Farid ud-din Maund Ganj-I-Shakar.

Farid occupies a place of pre-eminence among the Punjabi poets. During his lifetime, wherever he went, whomever he conversed with, could not but be influenced by the high, pious and divine ideas of Farid. So much so that Raja Gokul Dev changed the name of his capital town to Faridkot in honour of this great Sufi saint. Faridkot is today one of the important towns of the Punjab state. Sheikh Farid was a disciple of Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki, the disciple & spiritual successor of Hazrat Ali who had received spiritual training from Hasan Basri; a known saint of Chishti traditon. Baba ji was born in 1173AD at Khetwal, now known as Chawli Mashaikh, a village in the Multan district (Pakistan). His mother's name was Mariam, also called Kursum by some. It is said that after birth, he didn't suck milk for breatfeeding until night because he observed Roza (fast) at the

time of his birth. This simplicity and austerity in the manner of his diet was to remain a life-long habit. The writer of 'Life and Times of Sheikh Farid' says that half a tumbler of Sherbat (sweetened water), few raisins and half a loaf of bread, prepared of the millet flour generally comprised his daily meal.

Farid's mother was very wise & noble, and wished for her son to acquire the best education so that he could comprehend the Truth. His father, Sheikh Jala ud-din Suleman, was descendant of the second Calipha of Islam. According to a historian, Farid was related to the Royal family of emperor Farakhshal of Kabul, but the family was uprooted due to the invasions by Chingiz. Farid deeply impressed his spiritual mentor, Kaki, with his varied virtues. Thus, Kaki had a high respect for this disciple whom he used to call the most important bead in the rosary of Dharma.

In an absolutely impressive manner, Sheikh Farid realised this manifest world, the reality of God. He advises us to overcome worldly temptations & remain devoted to God, the creator of the whole universe. He cautions us against the false attractions of the world through his Bani which is deeply sensitive to the feeling of Empathy, Inevitable death & the waste of human life due to man's indifference to God & goodness. He continued preaching his message throughout his life, and at last breathed his last in AD 1266 at Pak Patan, earlier known by the name Ajodhan. He was succeeded on his spiritual throne by his son, Diwan Badrud-din Suleman.

The essence of the hymns of Farid can be stated as follows:

- Never forget Death under any circumstances.
- Avoid all quarrelling & polemics.
- Non-violence is the most beautiful ornament of Peaceful life.

Baba Farid ji exhorts mankind to cultivate these & all such virtues. He states that Contentment resides in the heart purified of all traces of Ego & Greed. Talking of a Faqir (hermit) he states that any new cloth is like a coffin for him. According to him, the detached person is also the wisest. He is the greatest who can face both pleasure & pain with Equanimity. The richest person is

the one with the most content heart. He who has given up contentment is the worst dependent. Farid ji preached Ideology reflecting the reality of life. That is perhaps why he has been known as the best poet of old age & death.

According to Farid, self-realisation or liberation from self is the other name for God-realisation One who is subject to desires of senses, is the meanest of all because such a man fails to control his mind, and the endless desires emanating from mind make him a tool in the hands of the devil who makes him dance to his tune. Farid not only preached detachment and austerity but also made these the guiding principles of his life. It is said that at the time of Farid's death even a small piece of cloth to serve as coffin for his body could not be found in his house. For the tomb over his grave, the bricks were taken by pulling down a portion of one of the walls of his house.

The hymns of Sheikh Farid are available at 3 different places in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (SGGS):

- 2 hymns under Asa musical measures.
- 2 hymns under Suhi measure
- 112 slokas toward end of Scripture

Farid's 'Bani' (religious text) is small in volume but has moved mankind over the last eight centuries. The lyrical content and haunting melody of these 'slokas' has been so great that every visitor to Punjab has stopped to pay homage to the soul, which conceived them. In the true Sufi tradition, Farid employed sensual imagery to convey mystical meaning. Regarding God as eternal beauty, the Sufi poets, both in Persia and India, had set new trends in poetry. Its special quality lay in the fact that unless one knows the intentions of the poet, one cannot distinguish whether it is an ode to human love or a hymn addressed to a deity. Take for example this love song of the Baba.

"The alleyway is muddy, O Farid, The Beloved's House is distance, if I go I would drench my cloak, And break my bond if I stay. It's the Creator's ordinance, this deluge; Go I will to my Beloved to strengthen
The links of love, and let my woollen sheet
Be drenched with downpour."

Even the illiterate could understand and enjoy Farid's metaphors and imagery - rooted as they were in the soil.

The high reputation Farid obtained in Delhi soon became irksome to him. He therefore made his way to Hansi, where he remained for some time. Meanwhile Khwaja Qutub-ud- Bakhtiar Kaki died at Delhi and Baba Farid paid a second visit to that city, and assumed the mantle of his late spiritual guide. He ultimately left it in the keeping of Jamal-ud-Din of Hansi and thence proceeded to Ajodhan, the present Pak Pattan. The manner in which the name of Ajodhan changed to Pak Pattan was that a canal which derived its water from the Sutlej passed near the town. It was usual for all who visited Baba Farid to wash their hands and feet there. The place then became known as Baba Sahib ji da Pak Pattan, or Farid's cleansing ferry.

Sheikh Farid ji made Pak Pattan a great center of Sufi thoughts. People from all over India and Middle-east would come to see him. He always used his language, that is, Punjabi spoken by common people, even though he was highly learned and educated in Arabic, Persian, etc. His all couplets are written in Punjabi, in Persian script. He generally rejected offerings of money, but would accept gifts of food, etc for public kitchen. Baba Farid went to Delhi again and was received with a most hospitable reception. Emperor Nasir-ud-Din Balban introduced him to his family. Hazabra, the Emperor's daughter, was married to Baba Sheikh Farid, but only after Emperor Balban promised not to give any costly gifts. Baba ji distributed all her jewels, etc. to the poor.

Once seven hundred holy men were sitting together. An inquirer put them four questions to which Baba Farid ji replied :

Q.1 Who is the wisest of men?

A.1 He who refraineth from Sin.

Q.2 Who is the most intelligent?

A.1 He who is not disconcerted at anything.

Q.3 Who is most independent?

A.3 He who practise the contentment.

Q.4 Who is the most needy?

A.4 He who practise the it not.

A Student asked Baba Farid if singing was lawful and proper. He replied that, according to Islam, it was certainly unlawful, but its propriety was still a matter of discussion. Nizam-ud-Dauliya told Nasir-ud-din, a disciple of his, that one day when he went to visit Baba Farid he stood at his door, and saw him dancing as he sang the following :

I wish ever to live in Thy love, O God
If I become the dust under Thy feet, I shall live
I thy slave desire none but Thee in both worlds;
For Thee I will live and for Thee I will die.

The following couplet was a favorite of Baba Farid's. Not every heart is capable of finding the secret of God's love. There are not pearls in every sea; there is not gold in every mine. Baba Farid visited a city called Mokhalpur, it is now called Faridkot in honor of the Baba Farid, and is in the Indian part of Punjab. Then he turned towards the Punjabi mountains where he converted a tribe. Baba Farid remained there for six months and then he locked up the house in which he had dwelt, saying that his successor would open it, and then returned to Pak Pattan. As his successor, Diwan Taj-ud-Din, was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina, he happened to visit that part of the country. He asked people their tribe name, they said they were descendents of Qutub-ul-Alam Baba Farid Shakarganj. And thus Taj-ud-din opened the door of Baba Farid's hut hundreds of years later.

Baba Farid died of Pneumonia on the fifth day of the month of Muharram, CE 1266. The date of Baba Farid's death is commemorated by chronograms (a) Farid Asari (b) Auliye Khudai. He was unique, a saint of God. Baba Farid was buried outside the town of Pak Pattan at a place called Martyr's Grave. His torch of Sufi thoughts was carried by his successor and subsequently several others such as Bhagat Kabir, Guru Nanak, etc. were influenced by the teachings of the great Saint. Guru Nanak's contemporary was a Baba Sheikh Farid Sani, or the second Sheikh Farid, 6th in succession of Baba Farid Shaikh Shakarganj. Thus, Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj can be truly called the founder of Punjabi literature, making Punjabi literature older than Hindi, Urdu, etc. It was much after Baba Farid's use of Punjabi that Tulsidas, Mira Bai, etc started using Hindi as the

language for writing religious literature. Baba Sheikh Farid can truly be called the founder of the Punjabi literary tradition.

Another article on Sheikh Farid

Rise Oh! Farid! do your ablutions And say the morning prayers. Behead the head that does not bow before the Lord.

It is early morning, some eight hundred years ago. In a small village named Khotwal; near Ajodhan, in West Punjab, an old man and his wife are worried. The lady of the house has just discovered that there are no sweets in the house and their child would not say his prayers without the promised prize. The understanding is that the mother keeps sweets beneath the prayer mat; this serves as a bait, as it were, for the child. He would get up and after he has said his prayers, he starts eating sweets. The child is fond of sweets. The shops are closed and the neighbors are asleep. The old father has a rustic sense of humor. "We collect some pebbles from the street and deposit them beneath the prayer mat," he suggests. "And if he discovers it, he would never say his prayers", the mother voices her fears. "No", says the father, "he looks for the prize only when he has earned it, after finishing his prayers. By that time, the shops in the bazaar will open and we shall buy him sweets".

The trick works. Farid wakes up at the appointed time and making sure that his prize has been duly kept beneath the prayer-mat, he starts saying his prayers. The old man, his father, is happy in the heart of his hearts. The moment he finishes his prayers, the child lifts the corner of the prayer-mat and pulls out the prize bag. As he takes the first helping, the mother stops him, "No, son they are not sweets; your father has gone to the bazaar to bring them." "But they are sweets," the child insists; he starts munching the piece in his hand. "It's sweeter than ever. What is wrong with it?" To her astonishment the mother finds that it is no handful of pebbles. They are sweets. As sweet as candy. A miracle had taken place. From that day, Sheikh Farid came to be known as Ganj-I-Shakr, the store-house of candy. The real name of Sheikh Farid was Farid-ud-Din Masood. He was given this name after the great Sufi poet Farid-ud-Din Attar. Sheikh Farid was born in A.D. 1173. His father's name was Sheikh Jamal-ud-Din Suleman. His mother was a God-fearing lady. Her name was Kulsum Bibi. Sheikh Jamal-ud-

Din had three sons and a daughter. Sheilth Farid was the second son. Sheikh Farid was born at a time when the Muslims were trying to establish their rule in India. A large number of Islamic scholars and religious leaders came and settled here. Some believe that they had been driven to India by Chengiz Khan, who was at that time active in West Asia. It seems more probable that they were invited by the conquerors to propagate the Muslim way of life in the country of their domicile. They were granted liberal endowments and settled in various parts of the country. Some of the more important centers of Islamic learning in Northern India were Delhi, Panipat, Hansi, Uch and Multan. Sheikh Farid's father had settled in Khotwal. When Farid grew up, he shifted to Multan for higher studies. Multan attracted eminent scholars from Iran and Baghdad.

It was at Multan that Farid came across his spiritual mentor, Hazrat Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki. He took Farid along with him to Delhi where they met Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, the greatest name among the Muslim men of God belonging to the time. It is said that Farid underwent severe penance and asceticism under Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din's stewardship. He hung himself upside down in a well for forty days. He neither ate nor drank but remained attuned to the Almighty. There are a number of references to this experience:

*Says Farid,
My bread is made of wood,
And hunger is my sauce;
Those who eat rich food,
Will suffer severe agonies.*

Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi was Sheikh Farid's most prominent follower and a renowned Sufi himself. At the age of 90, Baba Farid sent for Harrat Nizamuddin and taking leave of him, breathed his last. It was a lucky coincidence that Guru Nanak met Sheikh Ibrahim, a follower of Baha Farid in the sixteenth century and recorded Baba Farid's poetry which was later on preserved in the Holy Granth Farid wrote a large of couplets (sloka) which are very popular with Punjabi-speaking people. They are noted for their musicality and sweet cadence of diction:

*Says Farid,
I have seen the eyes that lured the world.*

*A trace of kohl they would not bear.
And birds, today, have made their nests in them.
Says Farid,
Why do you roam the jungles with thorns pricking your
feet?
Your Lord dwells in your heart.
And you wander about in search of Him.
Says Farid,
I thought I was alone who suffered.
I went on top of the house,
And found every house on fire.*

Owing partly to the distance of time between Sheikh Farid and Guru Nanak and partly to the influence of eastern Punjabi expressions in sheikh Farid's verses as found in the Guru Granth, it is sometimes doubted if they are actually Sheikh Farid's compositions. Some scholars have explicitly attributed them to a contemporary of Guru Nanak, Sheikh Ibrahim, who was the religious head at Pakpatan at that time. These attributions are difficult to accept Firstly, the Sikh Gurus, both Nanak and Arjan, were too discriminating scholars of the lore of their time to have been deceived into believing the compositions of a contemporary to be those of his illustrious predecessor of three hundred years earlier. Secondly, there are references in these verses to some events of the times and austerities undergone by the first Sheikh Farid. A much later descendant of his would not arrogate those austerities to himself. Thirdly, Guru Arjan who compiled the Guru Ganth is not known to have accorded the honor of inclusion in the scripture of his religion the compositions of any contemporary of local importance only. Even a famous mystic of the time, Shah Hussain, was not accorded that honor.

It is sometimes argued that since the modern Indian languages began to take shape in the eighth or ninth century and that literary traditions remained strongly conservative and were reflected primarily through Apabhramsha up to the 11th century, it is difficult to accept that the Multani dialect could have attained in the 12th century such literary refinement as is evidenced in Sheikh Farid's verses. Also they are so similar in their style and diction to the compositions of Guru Nanak and even Guru Arjan that it becomes bard to believe that there is a distance of some three hundred years between the two. If we

proceed on the basis of this argument of chronic change, the language of Sheikh Farid's verses is not much different from refined Multani speech extant even today after a lapse of four centuries. And there is no reason to believe that the rate of change was quicker in the earlier period.

There can be no doubt about Sheikh Farid's deep learning. His available compositions, though written in a dialect, amply suggest a learned mind behind the sensitive idiom, a mind that has steeped itself in the tradition of his age and creed and is capable of absorbing the influences of his environment.

However, a feature of Sheikh Farid's compositions available in the Guru Granth is that they do not seem to be the work of a religious missionary of Islam who is known to have enjoyed great esteem in high circles both religious and temporal and to have converted large numbers of people to Islam. These compositions have very little of the spirit of Islamic Shara use very little of Islamic religious lore and do not show any marked sectarian trend. From the nature of the contents, they seem to be the work of a Muslim who though deeply religious had very little to do with Islamic lore. On the other hand, he is keenly aware with the transitory nature of this world as per the Hindu belief. It is surprising indeed that nowhere in these verses does the name of the Muslim Prophet Mohammed ever occur, nor do his titles of Nabi, Rasul, Paigambar, etc. Even the word 'Murshid', a popular concept of Sufi tradition, is not to be found. The general temper is devotional, no doubt, and great stress is laid upon the performance of prayers, fasting and other ways of worship according to Islam. The spirit is, nevertheless, of Hindu bhakti. Even the words Guru and Prabhu occur in one of the hymns.

Like most religious and metaphysical writing, Sheikh Farid's poetry has for its general content, man's love of God. Such poetry has naturally to be lyrical and sentimental and its imagery erotic. In Sheikh Farid the relationship between God and man is that of husband and wife. In the very first three of his couplets found in the Guru Granth he visualizes the relationship between man and God first as that between man and death and then gives it the conjugal parallel. The day woman was born, he says, the hour of dedication to the husband was fixed. Death,

the bridegroom, heard of for long, comes and shows himself at the appointed hour. The helpless soul is beaten out of the bones. Death, the bridegroom, must take away in marriage the soul, the bride. Let the soul understand this that the appointed hour cannot be evaded.

There is very little difference between God and the Angel of Death in Sheikh Farid's imagery. In another couplet he says:

*Had I known the sesame seeds were so small in quantity
I should have been liberal in filling my fist.*

*Had I known my Lord was not yet an adult,
I would have prided less in myself.*

In yet another verse, he says again:

*Had I known the end would slip,
Tighter would I have made the knot.*

*Nobody matters to me as much as You,
Though I have traversed a whole world.*

This world indeed appears to Sheikh Farid to be an obstacle in the way of man's union with God. He says:

*The lanes are muddy and far is the house
of the One I love so much.*

*If I walk to Him I wet my rug, and
remaining behind, I fail in my love!*

Life in this world is a period of separation from God, which is full of sorrow, and pain:

*Sorrow is the bedstead,
Pain the fiber with which it is woven,*

And separation is the quilt

See this is the life we lead, O Lord.

*Absorption in the affairs of the world, in forgetfulness of
God, is regarded by Sheikh Farid as desertion by a woman
of her husband and going over to an alien house.*

*Give it not me, Oh Lord, that I should
seek alien shelter.*

*If that is what You have willed,
Rather take the life out of this body.*

*Man's duty in this life is to win the love of God as it is the
woman's to win the love of her husband, and as such,
youth or age should not matter;*

*Those who have not wooed Him when their hair was dark,
May do so when their hair is grey.*

*For if you love the Lord
 The newness of youth will be yours again.
 The metaphors of wooing the husband and being accepted
 by him or failing in being accepted have been used in
 many other verses also:
 I did not sleep with my love tonight
 And every bit of my body aches.
 Go ask the deserted ones,
 How they pass their nights.
 I am not afraid of the passing of my youth,
 If the love of my Lord does not pass with it.
 So many youths have withered away without love.*

The fear of death is perhaps a more forceful emotion in Sheikh Farid's poetry and he has expressed it in touching figures of speech. As mentioned before, the main image is that of death as the bridegroom and the human soul as the bride, and subordinate figures, the reduction of the body to dust, the greying of the hair, the trembling of the limbs and drying away of the bones have been used to reinforce the argument. The motif of rich and poor being brought to the same end has also been used quite often, too.

The impermanence of life on this earth has been illustrated by the figure of a bird coming to play on the bank of a pool. In some verses man has been instructed how to behave in this transitory world. He is advised to live humbly and poorly and remain ever conscious of his sins.

Like most men of renunciation, Sheikh Farid regards detachment from this world as the right path for man. A true fakir has been pictured by him thus:

*On the bank of a pool in the moor
 The swan has come to alight
 But he does not dip his beak to drink,
 He is eager to fly away.*

The teachings of Sheikh Farid as embodied in these verses do not indeed smack at all of any superior attitude. He comes down to the level of the poorest of the poor and calls himself a sinner. This attitude of his endeared him to the conquered people. It is this fact of endearment which is responsible,

perhaps, for the inclusion of his poetry in the Scripture of the Sikh Gurus who were in their time and in their own way endeavoring to uplift their people and to give them the strength to stand up to oppression.

There is nothing in Sheilth Farid's poetry that is strident, or offensive to the sentiments of the Indian people. Unlike missionaries in general, he does not play up the superior virtues of his creed. Nowhere does he make any reference to the caste system, to idolatry or to other peculiar features of the Brahmanical creed or creeds. His verse is singularly free from any social, historical or sectarian prejudices. No doubt, in many of his verses he exhorts people to offer prayers in the Muslim way and to practice other obligations of the Muslim creed, but his teachings are of a general moral nature and have to be judged as such. His message is for a typical feudal society; stressing detachment from the world, if not actual renunciation of it, to purge oneself of all ambition and passion, to be humble, poor, passive and contented. As such Farid must be credited with exercising a refining influence on the society of his day and keeping down the pressure of individual ambition and greed and of conflict. No other teaching was to be expected from a high-souled man like Sheikh Farid, especially when he happened to be on the winning side in the conflict between the two sets of forces.

Specimens of Farid's verse

My bread is made of wood and my hunger is my sauce

Those who eat rich meals shall come to grief.

*Says Farid, you must fathom the ocean which contains
what you want*

Why do you soil your hand searching the petty ponds;

*Says Farid, the Greater is in the creation and the creation
in the Creator*

Whom shall we blame when He is everywhere?

Another Article on Baba Farid

There are 134 hymns of Sheik Farid incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. Many Sikh scholars ascribe them to:

1) Farid Shakarganj (1173 – 1265AD or 569-664 AH) of Pak Pattan, a disciple of the Sufi Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki.

2) The tenth in succession to his post was Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim), also known as "Farid Sani" or "Farid the 2nd", and it is this Farid who Guru Nanak Sahib met on two occasions.

Max Arthur Macauliffe states that hymns ascribed to Farid are compositions by the latter Farid, whereas others have ascribed them to Farid Shakarganj.

There are still other scholars who believe that the hymns were composed by different Sufis of the Pak Pattan centre, all using the poetic name Farid as was the custom in those days as the leader of an order chose his most suitable devotee to take his place shortly before his death.

As a result, no account would be complete without details of both of the Farid's lives.

1) Shakar Ganj / Sheikh Farid (1173-1265 A.D)

Baba Farid was born on the first day of the month of Ramzan in 1173 CE in the Punjab town of Kothiwal. His parents named him Farid-ud-Din Masaud, while "Shakar Ganj" got tagged to his name at a later stage, but he is mostly revered as Baba Farid of Pak Pattan. Baba Sheikh Farid was born at a time when Punjab was going through very tough times. Tamarlane (Taimur, the Lame), Halaku (son of Chengez Khan), Mohammed Ghouri, Mahmud Ghazanvi, etc. had or were ravaging Punjab when Farid was born.

At birth his parents named him Farid-ud-Din Masaud, but he is mostly revered as Baba Farid of Pak Pattan. When Farid was a few years old his mother taught him his prayers. The boy asked what was gained by his prayers. His mother replied 'sugar'. She used to hide some sugar crystals under his prayer-carpet, and, when he had finished his prayers, she would draw it forth and give it to Farid as a reward for his devotion.

On one occasion, when his mother was absent, he prayed a great deal, and, it is said, he found a correspondingly greater supply of sugar under his carpet. Pleased with the size of his 'reward' he ate some himself and shared the the rest with his playfellows. He related the circumstance to his mother on her return and as she had forgot to place his usual reward under his prayer mat she realized it wa a miraculous gift from God, so she gave him the surname Shakar Ganj, meaning a "treasury of sugar".

There is a great deal known or written regarding the original Shaikh Farid. Two genealogies of Shaikh Farid, subsequently called Farid Shakar Ganj, are given in the Jawahir-i-Faridi - one spiritual, the other temporal.

He received his spiritual position from his priest Khwaja Qutub-ul-din Bakhtiyar Ushi of Dihli, whose spiritual predecessors derive in an unbroken line from the Prophet of Makka. Farid's temporal (family genealogy) has been traced back through princes and kings to Hazrat Amir-ul-Mumanin Umr-bin-ul Khitab Qureshi Makki Faruqi, the second Khalifa of the Muslims.

Violent rulers in India

The official language of India was Turkish and Persian. The Slave Dynasty of Qutb-Ud-Din Aibak was at that time being headed by Sultan Balban. 200-300 years earlier to the West of the Indian subcontinent, sword of Islam had swept through the countries like Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

In India too, Qutb-ud-din Aibak succeeded in establishing a line of rulers, which ruled for some decades from Delhi, over quite a lot of territory. Then came the sufi saints from Arabia and other places to spread their message of love for Allah. Sufi saints like Khwaja Qutub-Ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki, who was a Syed of Jaffri Hussaini tribe, were very famous.

Baba Farid's meeting

Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki was Born around 1150 CE and studied under Abu Hafiz, a celebrated doctor of Ush, he went to Ajmer and became a disciple of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti. In due time he proceeded to Delhi where Baba Farid met him and

became his disciple. Emperor Sultan Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish was also his disciple. He died in CE 1235 and was buried in Delhi, where his tomb is held in devout reverence by pious Hindus and Muslims. His descendants are called Chishtis from the tribe of his priest. - Makhazan-ul-Tawarikh.

Genealogy of Baba ji

Genealogy of Baba Sheikh Farid ji is given in the Jawahir-e-Faridi (The gems of Farid), preserved at the shrine of Pak Pattan, by Ali Asghar of Bahadal, a town near Sirhind. Baba Sheikh Farid ji descended from Farrukh Shah, who was king of Kabul and kings of Ghazni and other states were subject to him. Baba Farid ji's Great Grandfather was son of Farrukh Shah, the emperor of Kabul. During that time, Baba Farid's Great Grandfather was killed when Halaku, the grandson of Chengez Khan invaded Kabul. He killed several princes and learned men, including several of Baba Farid's ancestors. Baba Farid's Grandfather Shaikh Shaib abandoned their country and took refuge in the Punjab in CE 1125.

Moved to Punjab

The Qazi of Kasur who was acquainted with the high position Shaikh Shaib had held there, treated him and his relatives with great respect and hospitality. After some time Shaikh Shaib proceeded to Multan where he deemed he should be less exposed to worldly influences or the temptings of ambition.

He took his abode in Kothiwal, now known as Chawali Mushaikh, close to Dipalpur. He established in Kothiwal, a private college for religious instruction and attracted much attention. His eldest son Jamal-ud-din married Bibi Miriam, daughter of Syed Muhammad Abdula Shah - a descendant of Ali. Bibi Miriam had three sons, Khwaja Aziz-ud-din, Farid-ud- Din Masaud (Baba Farid) and Khwaja Najib-ud-din, and one daughter Khatun Jamila.

Becomes Hajji and obtains scholarship

When Baba Farid was 16 years old, he went to Hajj and stayed in the house of Abdul Rahim Ansari. Since Baba Farid ji

use to talk in Punjabi, an unkempt faqir on hearing Farid's language foretold the Boy's subsequent greatness.

After Farid came back to Punjab, he was sent to Khwaja Qutub-ud-Din Bakhtiar Kaki at Delhi to learn theology. Qutub-ud-din, on finding Baba Farid deficient in scholarship sent him to the shrine of Abdul Shakur of Sarsa, near Delhi to finish his education. On that occasion Baba Farid repeated the following: O Farid, thou hast not walked in God's way; therefore He hath not appeared unto thee Who is there who hath knocked at God's door for whom it hath not been opened Lost thy life on the way of the Friend if thou desire to be even as those holy men.

The high reputation Farid acquired in Delhi soon became irksome to him. He therefore made his way to Hansi, where he remained for some time. Meanwhile Khwaja Qutub-ud- Bakhtiar Kaki died at Delhi and Baba Farid paid a second visit to that city, and assumed the mantle of his late spiritual guide.

Moved to Pak Pattan

He ultimately left it in the keeping of Jamal-ud-Din of Hansi and thence proceeded to Ajodhan, the present Pak Pattan. The manner in which the name of Ajodhan changed to Pak Pattan was that a canal, which derived its water from the Sutlej passed near the town. It was usual for all who visited Baba Farid to wash their hands and feet there. The place henceforth became known as Baba Sahib ji da Pak Pattan, or Farid's cleansing ferry.

Sheikh Farid ji made Pak Pattan a great center of Sufi thoughts. People from all over India and Middle East would come to see him. He always used his language, that is, Punjabi spoken by common people, even though he was highly learned and educated in Arabic, Persian, etc.

All his couplets are written in Punjabi or Persian script. He generally rejected offerings of money, but would accept gifts of food, etc. for public kitchen. Baba Farid went to Delhi again and was received with a hospitable reception.

Emperor Nasir-ud-Din Balban introduced him to his family. Hazabra, the Emperor's daughter, was married to Baba

Sheikh Farid, but only after Emperor Balban promised not to give any costly gifts. Baba ji distributed all her jewels, etc. to the poor.

Inquiry?

Once seven hundred holy men were sitting together. An inquirer put them four questions to which Baba Farid ji replied:

Q.1 Who is the wisest of men?

A.1 He who refraineth from Sin.

Q.2 Who is the most intelligent?

A.1 He who is not disconcerted at anything.

Q.3 Who is most independent?

A.3 He who practises contentment.

Q.4 Who is the most needy?

A.4 He who practice the it not.

Is singing lawful?

A student asked Baba Farid if singing was lawful and proper. He replied that, according to Islam, it was certainly unlawful, but its propriety was still a matter of discussion. Nizam-ud-Dauliya told Nasir-ud-din, a disciple of his, that one day when he went to visit Baba Farid he stood at his door, and saw him dancing as he sang the following :

I wish ever to live in Thy love, O God.

If I become the dust under Thy feet, I shall live

I, thy slave, desire none but Thee in both worlds;

For Thee I will live and for Thee I will die.

The following couplet was a favorite of Baba Farid's:
Not every heart is capable of finding the secret of God's love.
There are not pearls in every sea; there is not gold in every mine.

Mokhalpur renamed Faridkot

Baba Farid visited a city called Mokhalpur, it is now called Faridkot in honor of Baba Farid; today it is in the Indian part of Punjab. He then turned his efforts towards the Punjabi mountains where he converted a whole tribe. Baba Farid remained there for six months and then he locked up the house in which he had dwelt, saying that his successor would open it, and then returned to Pak Pattan.

As his successor, Diwan Taj-ud-Din, was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina, he happened to visit that part of the country. He asked people the name of their tribe, they said they were descendents of Qutub-ul-Alam Baba Farid Shakarganj. And thus Taj-ud-din opened the door of Baba Farid's hut hundreds of years later.

Baba ji earthly demise

Baba Farid died of pneumonia on the fifth day of the month of Muharram, CE 1266. The date of Baba Farid's death is commemorated by chronograms (a) Farid Asari (b) Auliye Khudai. Baba Farid was buried outside the town of Pak Pattan at a place called Martyr's Grave. Guru Nanak's contemporary was Baba Sheikh Farid Sani, or the second Sheikh Farid, 6th in succession of Baba Farid Shaikh Shakarganj.

The father of Punjabi literature

Thus, Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj can be truly called the founder of the Punjabi literary tradition, making Punjabi literature older than that using Hindi, Urdu, etc. It was much later, after Baba Farid's use of Punjabi, that the writers Tulsidas, Mira Bai, and others started using Hindi as the language for writing religious literature.

The Robber Becomes Blind

Nizam-ul-Din Auliya, a disciple of Farid, relates a legend of a robber who went to Farid's mother's house to steal. On beginning his operations he lost his sight. He then cried out that there must be some saint or miracle-worker present. He vowed that, if his sight was restored, he would renounce thieving and become a good Muhammadan.

On hearing his vow Miriam prayed for him, and his sight was restored. He went home, and returned to her the following morning with an offering of milk. Accompanied by his wife and children, he expressed a desire that they should all become Muhammadans.

Miriam caused his wishes in this respect to be gratified, with the result that they all became holy. In reply to her, he said

his name was Chawa. His shrine among others in that locality has subsequently become a place of devout pilgrimage.

Farid Ji's Brth

When Farid was conceived, his mother used to spend her days and nights in prayer. He was born at Kothiwal on the first day of the month of Ramzan, the Muslim religion's most sacred month, A.H. 569 (1173). The sky that night was dark and cloudy, and the moon, whose appearance as the "pehli ka chained" (the new moon) when the moon is seen in the western sky as a faint and delicate white curve, which marks the beginning of Ramzan, the Muslim period of daylight fasting. Because the moon could not be seen the devotees did not know when to begin their fast. (Ramzan begins only after the new moon has been sighted.)

Then a holy man arrived reporting that a wonderful son had been born to Jamal-ul-Sulaiman and if the infant suckled, the time for fasting had not yet begun, but if, on the contrary he refused the breast, then all good Muhammadans must fast. Farid did not suckle, and so it was apparent the fast had begun. During the whole month of Ramzan, it is said, the infant only took milk by night in the Muhammadan fashion and fasted by day.

Hot water for his master

Another legend that has been passed along for centuries by disciples of Sheikh Farid, narrates an important episode during the time he was serving his spiritual mentor Khawaja Qutubudin Bakhtiyar Kaki. Sheikh Farid used to arrange hot water for his master's ablutions.

On a very wet and cold, stormy night, he realized he had no way to light a fire, as every thing around was either cold and humid or wet. So he left the sanctuary in search of fire. He kept walking through the dark rainy night, and had become quite wet and started to shiver, but he did not give up his search. Finally, he perceived a light at a distance and he started walking towards it. He finally arrived at the door of building. He knocked on it and a voice asked who it was.

After he revealed his name, a woman answered the door and asked why he had arrived at a brothel. Sheikh Farid

answered, that he was led there by light of the lamp, and he was looking for a way to light a fire, to heat water for his master's ablutions. The woman unabashedly told him that she would not give him the fire for free, and asked him if he had any way to pay her. He replied that he did not have any money. The woman then said, "If you need fire, you must give me what I ask for."

Sheikh Farid asked for her price and she replied that she would like one of his 'eyeballs' as payment. Sheikh Farid then asked for a knife, and unhesitatingly pulled out his eyeball and gave it to the woman. She, then gave him some burning wood to take away.

He arrived back at the sanctuary and performed his duties, as before. In the morning, when his master was entertaining an audience with discourse, Sheikh Farid came in with a bandage covering his eye that had been bleeding. His master asked him why he had tied a bandage to his eye.

Sheikh Farid replied in Punjabi "Akh Aa Gayee Ay" that meant his eye was infected and was oozing. His master smiled at him and said, "You are right, open your bandage now, Akh Aa Gayee Ay, which also in Punjabi, means that 'the eye has come'.

When Sheikh Farid opened his bandage, he rubbed his eye and opened it and found that his eyeball was back. His master then said, "This new eyeball is a little smaller than the one the Lord gave you. I could not compete with Him, so I got you a smaller one."

It is said that whoever ascends to the spiritual throne of Sheikh Farid, from then on, has one eye that is smaller than the other.

2) Shaikh Brahm (-1552 A.D)

Shaikh Brahm holds a distinguished place in the list of great saints, and bears several titles or appellations. He is called Farid Sani or Farid the Second, Salis Farid or the arbitrator Farid, Shaikh Brahm Kalan (Shaikh Brahm the elder), Bal Raja (the child king), Sahikh Brahm Sahib, and Shah Brahm.

He is said to have performed many miracles. Again the story of the thief is given as an one of Shaikh Brahm's miracles:

A thief once entered his house with criminal intent, but by God's will was struck blind and could not find his way out. When Shaikh Brahm arose at night to pray, he told his servant to fetch water for his ablutions. The servant saw the blind thief standing helpless on the floor, and informed his master. The thief prayed for forgiveness, and promised that, if he recovered his sight, he would renounce his evil ways. Upon this Shaikh Brahm prayed for him; he recovered his sight, and became a devout Musalmaan. Another of Shaikh Brahm's miracles is this: In a season of drought he took off his turban and began to whirl it about, upon which rain fell abundantly.

Family of Farid the 2nd

Two sons of Shaikh Brahm are mentioned – one Shaikh Taj-ul-Din Mahmud, a great saint, and another Shaikh Munawwar Shah Shahid. Shaikh Brahm had several disciples, such as Shaikh Salim Chishti Fatahpuri (the Holy man that foretold the birth of Akbar's son), Shaikh Ahmadi of Chunian, Baba Ahmad Lanak of Dipalpur, Maulvi Jalal-ul-Din of Shaikhsbad, Shah Abdul Fatah of Ghazipur, Haji Niamat Ulla of Shaikhupur, among others

Shaikh Brahm died on the 21st of Rajab, A.H. 960 (A.D 1552), after a spiritual reign of 42 years. The Kaulasat-ul-Tawarikh states that he was buried at Sarhind.

History

Among the many social and religious movements in India of the last two thousand years, the Bhakti movement of the middle ages from the 13th to the 17th centuries was the most pronounced, as it cut across all distinctions of high and low birth, the learned and the unlettered, men and women and opened the doors of spiritual realization and salvation to one and all. Besides, it provided a base for common socio-religious culture in India.

One great characteristic of the Indian civilization is that more than its kings and warriors and generals, it is the Saints and the Sufis who realized the goals of the Renaissance and the

Reformation. The cyclic tales recited by the lute players of ancient India, the songs of the wandering minstrels, the ballads and the 'kathaks' (storytellers) of medieval times provided a framework for the evolution and growth of the composite culture of India. They integrated the diverse elements of Indian society and knit them in a unified cultural necklace. It is these saints and sufis who bestowed a sense of Indianness on Indians down the ages. Baba Farid occupies a very high place in this cultural anthology.

There was something in Baba Farid's poetry akin to prayer. He spoke of his people in the people's dialect and asked them to use Punjabi for religious purposes. He started a 'silsilah at Pak Pattan and established a mystic organization, a 'Khanqah' (Monastery) on the lines of a European seminary upholding the rule of mind over matter in the ultimate analysis of human affairs.

Baba Sheikh Farid had been in the 12th & 13th centuries, a great intellectual, unique renunciat, perfect ascetic and committed devotee of the Timeless Lord who communicated to the common folk the revealed divine message through the medium of sweet, soothing Punjabi language. Farid lived a householder's life marked with contentment and perseverance. One of the greatest virtues of his life was his love and sympathy for entire mankind. His heart felt pain of oppression perpetuated by the Muslim invaders in the name of religion. He tried to put balm on the hurt psyche of the people through the medium of sweet, soothing words so that the adverse impact caused by excesses of the orthodox Muslims to the image of Islam could be neutralised. Such an act on the part of someone was required for the revival of the feeling of fraternity amongst mankind. The unique humanitarian values of compassion, love, sympathy, mutual understanding and appreciation are clothed in the hymns of Farid as fragrance is in flowers. For his sweet words, sweet ideals and sweet behaviour, Farid became known as an epitome of Sweetness (Shakarganj); his full name was Sheikh Farid ud-din Maund Ganj-I-Shakar.

Farid occupies a place of pre-eminence among the Punjabi poets. During his lifetime, wherever he went, whomever he conversed with, could not but be influenced by the high, pious and divine ideas of Farid. So much so that Raja Gokul Dev

changed the name of his capital town to Faridkot in honour of this great Sufi saint. Faridkot is today one of the important towns of the Punjab state. Sheikh Farid was a disciple of Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki, the disciple and spiritual successor of Hazrat Ali who had received spiritual training from Hasan Basri; a known saint of Chishti tradition. Baba ji was born in 1173AD at Khetwal, now known as Chawli Mashaikh, a village in the Multan district (Pakistan). His mother's name was Mariam, also called Kursum by some. It is said that after birth, he didn't suck milk for breastfeeding until night because he observed Roza (fast) at the time of his birth. This simplicity and austerity in the manner of his diet was to remain a life-long habit. The writer of 'Life and Times of Sheikh Farid' says that half a tumbler of Sherbat (sweetened water), few raisins and half a loaf of bread, prepared of the millet flour generally comprised his daily meal.

Farid's mother was very wise and noble, and wished for her son to acquire the best education so that he could comprehend the Truth. His father, Sheikh Jala ud-din Suleman, was descendant of the second Caliph of Islam. According to a historian, Farid was related to the Royal family of emperor Farakhshah of Kabul, but the family was uprooted due to the invasions by Chagiz. Farid deeply impressed his spiritual mentor, Kaki, with his varied virtues. Thus, Kaki had a high respect for this disciple whom he used to call the most important bead in the rosary of Dharma.

In an absolutely impressive manner, Sheikh Farid realised this manifest world, the reality of God. He advises us to overcome worldly temptations and remain devoted to God, the creator of the whole universe. He cautions us against the false attractions of the world through his Bani which is deeply sensitive to the feeling of Empathy, Inevitable death and the waste of human life due to man's indifference to God and goodness. He continued preaching his message throughout his life, and at last breathed his last in AD 1266 at Pak Patan, earlier known by the name Ajodhan. He was succeeded on his spiritual throne by his son, Diwan Badrud-din Suleman.

The essence of the hymns of Farid can be stated as follows:

- Never forget Death under any circumstances.
- Avoid all quarrelling and polemics.

- Non-violence is the most beautiful ornament of Peaceful life.

Baba Farid ji exhorts mankind to cultivate these and all such virtues. He states that Contentment resides in the heart purified of all traces of Ego and Greed. Talking of a Faqir (hermit) he states that any new cloth is like a coffin for him. According to him, the detached person is also the wisest. He is the greatest who can face both pleasure and pain with Equanimity. The richest person is the one with the most content heart. He who has given up contentment is the worst dependent. Farid ji preached Ideology reflecting the reality of life. That is perhaps why he has been known as the best poet of old age and death.

According to Farid, self-realisation or liberation from self is the other name for God-realisation. One who is subject to desires of senses, is the meanest of all because such a man fails to control his mind, and the endless desires emanating from mind make him a tool in the hands of the devil who makes him dance to his tune. Farid not only preached detachment and austerity but also made these the guiding principles of his life. It is said that at the time of Farid's death even a small piece of cloth to serve as coffin for his body could not be found in his house. For the tomb over his grave, the bricks were taken by pulling down a portion of one of the walls of his house.

The hymns of Sheikh Farid are available at 3 different places in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji:

- 2 hymns under Asa musical measures.
- 2 hymns under Suhi measure
- 112 slokas toward end of Scripture

Farid's 'Bani' (religious text) is small in volume but has moved mankind over the last eight centuries. The lyrical content and haunting melody of these 'slokas' has been so great that every visitor to Punjab has stopped to pay homage to the soul, which conceived them. In the true Sufi tradition, Farid employed sensual imagery to convey mystical meaning. Regarding God as eternal beauty, the Sufi poets, both in Persia and India, had set new trends in poetry. Its special quality lay in the fact that unless one knows the intentions of the poet, one cannot distinguish

whether it is an ode to human love or a hymn addressed to a deity. Take for example this love song of the Baba.

"The alleyway is muddy, O Farid, The Beloved's House is distance, if I go I would drench my cloak, And break my bond if I stay. It's the Creator's ordinance, this deluge; Go I will to my Beloved to strengthen
The links of love, and let my woollen sheet
Be drenched with downpour."

Even the illiterate could understand and enjoy Farid's metaphors and imagery - rooted as they were in the soil.

The high reputation Farid obtained in Delhi soon became irksome to him. He therefore made his way to Hansi, where he remained for some time. Meanwhile Khwaja Qutub-ud- Bakhtiar Kaki died at Delhi and Baba Farid paid a second visit to that city, and assumed the mantle of his late spiritual guide. He ultimately left it in the keeping of Jamal-ud-Din of Hansi and thence proceeded to Ajodhan, the present Pak Pattan. The manner in which the name of Ajodhan changed to Pak Pattan was that a canal which derived its water from the Sutlej passed near the town. It was usual for all who visited Baba Farid to wash their hands and feet there. The place then became known as Baba Sahib ji da Pak Pattan, or Farid's cleansing ferry.

Sheikh Farid ji made Pak Pattan a great center of Sufi thoughts. People from all over India and Middle-east would come to see him. He always used his language, that is, Punjabi spoken by common people, even though he was highly learned and educated in Arabic, Persian, etc. His all couplets are written in Punjabi, in Persian script. He generally rejected offerings of money, but would accept gifts of food, etc for public kitchen. Baba Farid went to Delhi again and was received with a most hospitable reception. Emperor Nasir-ud-Din Balban introduced him to his family. Hazabra, the Emperor's daughter, was married to Baba Sheikh Farid, but only after Emperor Balban promised not to give any costly gifts. Baba ji distributed all her jewels, etc. to the poor.



- Gurdwara Sri Godari Sahib
Faridkot City, Punjab, India.
Associated with Baba Sheikh Farid Ji.
It is said that before entering Faridkot City, Baba Sheikh Farid Ji had left his Godari (jacket) at this place.

Bhagat Jaidev Ji

"Utter the Name ambrosial essence of all existence,
By which torments not death, nor occurs birth,
Old age or fear of death."



JAIDEV (JAYADEVA), saint and poet, two of whose hymns are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib, is chiefly known to the literary world as the author of the Gita Govinda, a lyrical poem in which the love of Rādhā (soul or devotee) for Govinda (the Supreme Being) is described symbolically and mystically. Jaidev was born at Kindu Bilvā which, according to some, is now Kenduli, in Birbhūm district of West Bengal, on the river Ajay and, according to others, Kendūli-Sasan, on Prachi river, near jagannath Puri in Orissā. At the end of his poem, he has given his father's name as Bhojadeva and mother's as Rādhādevī, deciphered also as Ramādevī, or Vāmadcvi.

He is said to have flourished in the reign of Raja Karnarnav (AD 1142-56) and Rājā Purushottam Dev (AD 1170-80), both of Orissā. Several legends about him are recorded in the Bhaklamal of Chandradatta. In his youth, he led the life of an ascetic and a wandering preacher. The course changed for him as, while in Puri once, a Brāhmarm forced the hand of his daughter on him. It turned out to be a happy marriage. His wife sang with him the devotional songs which were of his own composition. He spent some years at Katham Kancli, now called Jaidevpur in his

memory, where he composed his immortal lyric, the Gita Govinda. From devotee of Lord Krsna he became a devotee of the Supreme Lord. He roamed about the country preaching the gospel of love of God and of man. Rājā Lakshmī Sen (AD 1175-1200), of Bengal, became his disciple. Jaidev lived long and died in the village where he was born, in happy retirement. There is a samadhi of the saint in the village and an annual fair is held on the first of Magh.

Besides the Gita Govinda, two other compositions, the Rasanā Raghava, a drama, and the Chanthalok, an essay on the grace of style, are also ascribed to him.

Jaidev's hymns in the Guru Granth Sāhib, one in Raga Gujari and the other in Rāga Mārū, are in adoration of Hari, the Supreme Being. "Duality," he says, "ended for me as I remembered God who is the fountainhead of all virtue. Cherish the Divine Name in your heart. By repeating His praise you will break the circuit of birth and death, and you will dread death no more. Your heart and your word and deed should be imbued with the love of One Hari alone." Bhāi Gurdas in his Vārāñ, X. 10, pays tribute to Jaidev's loving devotion whereby he attained the state when no distinction remains between "the devotee and the infinite."

Bhagat Jaidev was a Saint & Poet, his childhood name was Pardharmrik, and was born in the southern part of Bengal. His mother's name was Rama Devi (also called Bani Devi by some) & father's name was Bhojdev. The village of Jaidev's birth is situated in the district of Bir Bhumi on the River Ajay.

Jaidev was orphaned early in childhood. He used to express grief at the loss of his parents by composing sad songs, and then by singing them. Narinjan, one of his father's friends, fraudulently usurped the entire family property, this helped trigger Jaidev's tendency toward renunciation & detachment even further. It was in such a mood of detachment that Jaidev devoted himself to the worship of Lord Krishna. His austere nature became so strong and intense that he used to avoid sitting in the shade of a tree for long lest it should attach him to the comfort it provided and become an obstacle in the way of God-realisation.

He had attachment only to God, and he used to sing His eulogies through His compositions. Thus, three volumes of his compositions came into being to be known as 1. Darshan Raghav 2. Geet Govinde 3. Chandia-Lok. Of these, his Geet Govinde has been generally accepted as better in terms of Poetics, music and thought contents. It is accepted amongst his followers that the Lord Akalpurkh himself would take the bodily form of Jagan Nath, so as to listen to his book and hear His eulogies face to face. As a result of his intense devotion towards Krishna, he was able to compose beautiful, mystical poetry. He remained for some time, a court poet & one of the five famous 'jewels' in the court of King Lachhman Sain of Bengal. Jaidev returned to his native village towards his later years. He was too old & weak to go to the River Ganga to bathe therein. However, floods caused a miracle, perhaps an outburst of a devotee's love for his deity. The Ganga river naturally shifted its course a little and started flowing just by Jaidev's residence. What wonderful example of Nature's love for its devotees!

Once it so happened that Jaidev stopped midway completing a verse, and God himself completed it in his absence. Impressed further by this miracle, Jaidev dedicated himself more intensely to the worship of Lord Krishna. So he renounced his household and wife (Padmavati) and left for the forest to devote himself fully to the Master. In the forest, he found the word 'Geet Govinde' written on each leaf. This is how the Divine Spirit revealed itself to Jaidev. "Whichever direction I look to, I find only the Lord and nothing else", but this is only one side of the coin, the other is as follows:

According to the 10th stanza of Ver X of Bhai Gurdas, when God Himself completed the verse left incomplete by Jaidev, the latter felt proud that God liked his verse so much that He showed inclination to complete it. No sooner had this ego erupted in his mind, he was surprised to find that the contents of his book 'Geet Govinde' was written on each leaf of the tree. Thus this miracle put an end to his pride. He made a supplication to God Almighty with utter humility and prayed that this lapse on his part be ignored. He had then realised that God is Omniscient, and is capable of doing anything. Man, however great, powerful and famous he may be, is nothing against Him. In fact, whatever a human being is, he is due to God's grace.

After this incident, Jaidev's love, reverence and devotion towards God became more intense and immense. Guru Arjan Dev Ji, in his hymn recorded on Aang 1192 of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, has made an allusion to this and to Jaidev discarding this egoist tendency: Guru ji has said:

ਜੈਦੇਵ ਤਿਆਗਿਓ ਅਹੰਮੇਵ ॥ (੧੧੯੨-੧੦, ਬਸੰਤੁ, ਮਹਲਾ ੫)

Jai Dev gave up his egotism.

Guru ji has referred to many saints & holy-men in this hymn & states that different saints achieved oneness with the Lord through different means. If Dhanna realised Him through his innocence, Jaidev achieved Him through eradicating ego from his mind. Kabir concentrated on the Divine for long and ultimately became one with Him. Ajarnal, Balmik & prostitute Ganika realised God through constant remembrance of Him, by listening to the Divine Name from a parrot, respectfully. With the help of these instances, the Guru advises the seeker that he should make use of this human birth and remember the Lord. He cautions us against all those adverse effects of ego which Jaidev had fallen prey to.

Bhagat Jaidev of Bengal was a contemporary of Sheikh Farid of Punjab. Two hymns of Jaidev are found recorded in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji under 'Gujri' measure (Aang 526) and Maru measure (Aang 1106). Both these hymns were collected by Guru Nanak when during one of his preaching odysseys (1508-1515), Guru ji visited his village. These hymns were later included in the Scripture by Guru Arjan Dev.

Jaidev's hymns included in the Gujri measure can be summed up as follows: the true Lord is immanent in all places. He who ever remembers Him is freed from the fear of transmigration, old age, disease and suffering. His heart, his words, his deeds become pious. If a man has to win over the God of Death, it is necessary to seek the protection of the Timeless One. The grace of such a One is eternal & pervasive and is constantly bestowed throughout the preceding 3 eras. The only need is to remove all feelings of discrimination and differentiation which become possible only by remembering Him and singing His praises. Therefore O man, you should give up greed, lust and anger and seek His shelter, only then can you

realise Him. Guru Nanak has also reiterated similar views in one of his hymns appearing in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, at Aang 505.

In the other hymn included in the Maru measure, Jaidev expresses his deep devotion in the Real One. He states that he recites the Divine Name for 16 times only with the passing of one breath. In other words, it implies that he does not waste any moment of his breathing & remain engaged in the remembrance of God who is an epitome of nobility. Thus, he has overcome all distinctions of mine and thine between God and himself. He feels, that he has merged with God, just as a droplet merges with water. The love of the Divine has satiated all his desires. As such, he realised the Lord and thus broke the circuit of life and death.

Jaidev shares with us a very important event and experience on the way to God-realisation. Through this, he advises and inspires us to make Divine remembrance an integral part of our life so that we are able to achieve the ultimate aim of life.

Although only two of Jaidev's hymns are included in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, many more of his verses are extant in his Geet Govinde, Darsan Raghav & Chandra-Lok. People of Bengal, Orissa and Andhra recite these hymns with due devotion & reverence. Jaidev died in 1273AD.

Another Article on Bhagat Jaidev

Bhagat Jaidev Ji, bhagat and poet, two of whose hymns are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib, is chiefly known to the literary world as the author of the Gita Govinda, a lyrical poem in which the love of Rādhā (soul or devotee) for Govinda (the Supreme Being) is described symbolically and mystically.

Jaidev, his childhood name was Pardharmrik, was born at Kindu Bilvā which, according to some, is now Kenduli, about twenty miles from Suri, in Birbhūm district of West Bengal, on the river Ajay and, according to others, Kendūli-Sasan, on Prachi river, near jagannath Puri in Orissā, India. At the end of his

poem, he has given his father's name as Bhojadeva and mother's as Rādhādevī, deciphered also as Ramādevī, or Vāmadevī (also called Bani Devī by some). Bhagat Jaidev was a Bhagat and Poet and was born in the southern part of Bengal.

He became the most famous of the five distinguished poets who lived at the court of Lakshman Sen, King of Bengal, who dates from the year 1170. The five poets were called the five jewels of Lalishman Sen's court, and so proud was the King of them that he erected a monument to preserve their names to succeeding ages.

Very little is known of Jaidev's early life. It is certain that from his youth he was a diligent student of Sanskrit literature, and developed rare poetical talents. He is described by the author of the "Bhagat Mal" as an incarnation and treasury of melody on which, however, he owing to his ascetic habits, long preferred to feast his own soul rather than communicate to the world the splendid gifts he possessed. He wandered in several countries, provided with only a water-pot and dressed in the patched coat of a mendicant. Even pens, ink, and paper, generally so indispensable to literary men, were luxuries which he did not allow himself. Such was his determination to love nothing but God, that he would not sleep for two nights in succession under the same tree, lest he should conceive an undue preference for it and forget his Creator.

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Adult Life

It pleased God, with the object, it is stated of saving the human race, to withdraw Jaidev from his ascetic life. For this purpose, the chronicler relates, God devised the following expedient. An Agnihotri Brahman of Jagannath, to whom a beautiful daughter named Padamavati had been born as the result of many offerings and prayers, brought her up with the object of dedicating her as a dancing girl to the local idol. Her father duly conducted her to the idol and was ordered to take her away and bestow her on the great saint Jaidev. On this, she was taken to him, and he was informed of the divine decision in his favour. Jaidev reasoned with the Brahman, and told him he ought to give his daughter to some more wealthy man, who would be more suitable for her than a homeless ascetic like him.

The Brahman replied that he could not disobey God's order. Jaidev rejoined, 'God is master and omnipotent. He may have thousands and tens of thousands of wives, but one for me is the same as a hundred thousand' that is, he had no more need or ability to maintain one than he had a hundred thousand. After further discussion, in which the Brahman failed, notwithstanding the exercise of all his powers of persuasion, he left his daughter with Jaidev. Before his departure he told her it was impious to act in opposition to the will of God. She was to remain with Jaidev, and obey him according to the instructions laid down for wives in the Hindu sacred writings.

The tender girl remained with Jaidev and attended on him like his shadow. He is said to have represented to her the futility of living with him:

'Thou art wise,' he said; 'endeavour to do something to improve thy position; I have no power to maintain and cherish thee?'

She replied, 'What power hath this poor creature? Thou canst do as thou pleasest I am a sacrifice unto thee and shall never leave thee'.

On this Jaidev believed that God was forcing him into the alliance, and he reconciled himself to the situation. As the first preparation for domestic life he built a hut for his spouse, set up

an idol in it, and applied himself to its worship. He then began the composition of the celebrated poem the "Gitgovind". This is believed to have been his second composition, his first being a drama called "Rasana Raghava". A third work attributed to him is "Chandralok", an essay on the graces of style.

The fact appears to be that the mantling fire of Jaidev's genius sought for an outlet that with experience of life a change came over his religious opinions that he resolved no longer to play the hermit, but accept the wife offered him, distinguish himself, and seek for worldly fame and its pleasures. God has been introduced ex machina into the narrative to save Jaidev from the charges of inconsistency and submission to human passion.

Gitgovind

The Gitgovind is well known in both hemispheres. It has been translated into English prose and paraphrased in English verse. It is perhaps a solitary instance of a great popular poem composed in a dead language. In the twelfth century of the Christian era Sanskrit was, it was true, used as Latin was at the same time in Europe, but the great age had passed away when Sanskrit was a living language — the only recognized Indian vehicle of men's thoughts and aspirations. The Gitgovind is still not only remembered, but nightly chanted in the Karnatik countries and other parts of India, because it is ostensibly a love song and its strains are sweet and find a responsive echo in the human heart.

During the composition of the Gitgovind Jaidev represented Radhika the heroine as pouting because Krishan the hero had followed other loves. Krishan alters his ways~ and applies himself to the task of appeasing her and apologizing for his conduct. The poet was preparing to make Krishan address his lady love; 'Adorn my head by putting on it the lotus leaves of thy feet, which are an antidote to the poison of Cupid?' when he reflected that it would be a dishonour to his god if any woman were to put her feet on his head While thus reflecting the poet ceased to write, and went to bathe, intending subsequently to alter the sentence into more conformity with the relative positions of the hero and heroine, What was Jaidev's surprise

when on returning from his bath he found the verse completed exactly as he had subsequently intended! He asked his wife how it had occurred. She told him he had returned himself, and having written the verse gone away again. Upon this Jaidev knew that Krishan himself had written the verse, and thus hallowed the composition. The fame of the event and of the poem spread far and wide, and Jaidev obtained the high renown he had so earnestly sought.

Poem by the King

Satvika, King of Urisa (Orissa) at the time, was also a poet and learned man. He had accidentally selected for a poem the same subject as Jaidev, and he appears to have produced a work of respectable merit, which he directed his Brahmans to copy and circulate. In reply they showed him the composition of Jaidev. They meant by this that the Raja's poem was as nothing in comparison with Jaidev's. As well compare a lamp with the suns. The Raja in his pride could not accept the Brahmans' criticism, but caused both poems to be placed in the temple of his capital, and promised to abide by the decision of the idol as to which was superior.

The idol rejected the king's Gitgovind and took to his heart that of Jaidev. Upon this the Raja thinking himself greatly dishonoured was overcome by shame and jealousy, and set out to drown himself. Krishan is said to have taken pity on him. He appeared to him and told him it would be a vain and foolish act to put an end to his life. It was very clear that his poetical merit did not equal that of Jaidev, but, to compensate him for his disappointment, Krishan ordered that one of the Raja's verses should be inserted in each of the twelve cantos of Jaidev's poem, and both compositions should thus go forth to the world and down to distant ages. This was accordingly done.

Power of Gitgovind

The estimation in which the Gitgovind was held may be gathered from the following anecdote. A gardener's daughter while one day gathering eggplants was singing with great zest the following verse from the fifth canto of the poem:— The zephyr gently bloweth on the banks of the Yarnuna while Krishan tarrieth in the grove.

On this, it is said, the idol of Jagannath followed her wherever she went, with the object of feasting his heart on the dulcet strains. The idol wore only a thin jacket which was torn by the brambles. 'When the king went to worship and saw the condition of the idol's dress, he in astonishment asked the priests the cause. When the Raja learned what had occurred, he was perfectly satisfied of the superiority of the product of Jaidev's genius, and issued a proclamation that the Gitgovind should only be read in a clean and purified place, as Jagannath, the lord of the world, himself was in the habit of going to listen to it.

Not only Hindu, but men of all creeds were enchanted with the composition. It is related that a Mughal on hearing of the divine honours paid to the work, used to peruse it with the greatest delight. One day while riding he was singing its verses when he fell into an ecstasy of pleasure, and thought that, though a Moslem, he felt communion with Krishan.

Oriental chroniclers are enthusiastic in their praises of Jaidev. All other poets are compared to petty kings while he is the great chakrawarti or poetical monarch of the world! As the moon can-s not be concealed by the stars, as the eagle cannot be surpassed by any bird in flight, as Indar attracts notice in the midst of the gods, so is jaidev's fame conspicuous in the world4 it may be added that Jaidev himself does not appear to have been insensible of his own merits, At the conclusion of the Gilgovind he writes, 'Whatever is delightful in the modes of music, whatever is exquisite in the sweet art of love let the happy and wise learn from the sons of Jaidev.

Notwithstanding the lusciousness and sensuous beauty of several parts of the Gitgovind, there can be no doubt that Jaidev intended the poem as an elaborate religious allegory. This, too, is insisted on by the author of the Bhagat Mai, who states that the love scenes and rhetorical graces of the poet are not to be understood in the sense that persons of evil minds and dispositions attach to them. Radhika the heroine is heavenly wisdom. Tue milkmaids who divert Krishna from his allegiance to her, are the senses of smell, sight, touch, taste, and hearing Krishan represented as pursuing them is the human soul, which

attaches itself to earthly pleasures. The return of Krishan to his first love is the return of the repentant sinner to God, which gives joy in heaven.

The Thugs

After the completion of the poem Jaidev went to travel and visited Bindraban and Jaipur. To the latter place its king had given him a pressing invitation. While on those travels it is related that he met a party of thugs. He knew what they were from their ready offer to accompany him on his journey. Without more ado he pulled out his purse and gave them all the money and valuables he possessed thus reasoning, 'Wealth is the basis of sin; gluttony produceth disease; and love of the world purchaseth pain, so it is proper to discard all three.

The thugs at once suspected him. They had not been accustomed to obtain men's wealth without a struggle or without at least having made a request for it, and they concluded from Jaidev's readiness to part with his money, that he merely designed to have them arrested on their return to the city. One of them proposed to put him to death, but another said that would be a meaningless act. They only required his wealth, and that they had obtained. It was at last decided that they should cut off his hands and throw him into a narrow and dark well, and this was accordingly done.

Jaidev, it is said, meekly accepted the treatment he had received as a fate predestined for him, and applied himself to divine contemplation and the utterance of God's name. It chanced that Karaunch, the King Of Utkal, passed that way, and hearing that Jaidev was in the well caused him to be extricated. Jaidev was so little revengeful for his injuries he had sustained, that, in reply to the king's inquiries as to the cause of his mutilation, he told him he had been born so.. The king became convinced that Jaidev was a saint, and congratulated himself on his good fortune in meeting such a man.

Honoured by the King

The king had him conveyed to his capital where he was treated with all honour and respect, and a house set apart for him. He was, moreover, provided with food and every article of

comfort. The king himself offered to become his servant and, with hands clasped in the Oriental attitude of supplication, begged Jaidev to say what duty he could render him. Jaidev had one request to make, and that was that the king should serve holy men and not him. In happy faith and with open heart the king obeyed and performed menial service for the saints of God who were waiting at his gate. The fact that the king was performing such services was noised abroad and the thugs among others, heard of it.

They assumed the guise of religious men and proceeded to the monarch's gate. This led to an interview with Jaidev. He recognized them, and told the king that they were his brethren and very holy persons. Fortunate was the king in having been favoured with a sight of them and devoutly ought he to serve and minister unto them. The king took them into his palace, and lavished on them every honour that Oriental politeness and hospitality could suggest.

The thugs, however, recognizing Jaidev, were troubled for their safety, and applied for permission to depart. This was finally granted, and Jaidev dismissed them with a large present of money and a convoy of soldiers for their protection. On the way the soldiers fell into conversation with their charge. They remarked that they had never before seen visitors to the king so heartily and kindly treated, and they inquired in what relationship the men they were escorting stood to Jaidev. The thugs replied: 'What shall we say? It is not a fit thing to tell. The soldiers promised them perfect secrecy.

The thugs then proceeded to exercise their inventive faculties developed by long practice. They said that Jaidev and they had been servants of a king. For some offence Jaidev had been condemned to death, and they had been appointed his executioners. They merely, however, cut off his hands and thus saved his life. Through gratitude for that favour Jaidev induced the king to pay them such extraordinary attention. It is said that God could no longer endure the fabrication of false charges against His saint. The ground opened beneath the feet of the thugs, and they sank into the pit of hell!

King convinced about Jaidev

The soldiers in amazement returned to Jaidev and told him what had occurred. He began to tremble with pity for the thugs, and made a gesture as if rubbing his hands — the Oriental attitude expressive of grief - whereupon, it is related, new hands sprouted from his body. The soldiers went and informed the king of the two miracles their eyes had beheld. The king proceeded to Jaidev and performed before him the prostration due to saints.

He begged Jaidev to explain how the incidents had occurred. The saint for a long time refused, but, when greatly pressed by the king, gave him a detailed account of all the circumstances. The king's faith in Jaidev had now reached its utmost limit, and he knew that the man before him in the guise of a saint was really a divine incarnation it is the usual custom of saints when they receive evil always to return good, even as bad men return evil for evil, so the king deemed his conclusion warranted by the forgiving conduct of Jaidev.

Jaidev felt a longing for home and told the king of his determination to take his leave. The king put his head on the saint's feet, and represented to him that his country had turned to God and the practice of virtue, since it had been trodden by his holy feet. If the saint were to depart, the king's subjects would turn away from their faith. He therefore implored him to defer his departure. As a further inducement to Jaidev to abide with him, he went himself and brought Padamavati so that the saint's happiness might be complete, and his distant home forgotten. Padamavati was installed in the royal palace, and the queen received stringent orders to perform all menial offices for her.

Dedication of Padamavati

While Padamavati resided at the court the queen's brother died, and his wife was burned with him on the funeral pyre. One day when the queen was boasting of the wonderful devotion of her sister-in-law, Padamavati smiled! When asked the reason she replied 'To burn oneself alive with one's husband's corpse is far from being the acme of affection. True affection and love require a woman to sacrifice herself directly she even heareth of her husband's death.' In the present age,' replied the queen,

'thou alone art such a Sati,' a word defined by the author of the Bhagat Mal as a 'woman who considereth her husband a god and hath no concern with any other deity.' Not feeling flattered by the well-nigh unapproachable standard of conjugal devotion which alone Padamavati considered as worthy of admiration, the queen determined to put her to the test at the first opportunity.

One day when Jaidev was absent from home, the queen arranged that one of the royal servants pretended haste was to come to her when with Padamavati, and inform the latter that Jaidev had been attacked and killed in the forest by a tiger. On the servant coming to where they were seated and repeating this carefully tutored Story, Padamavati swooned and fell lifeless to the ground.

The queen who had brought about this disaster, turned pale and became distracted at the unexpected turn of events. She was severely rebuked by the king when he heard of the occurrence. Life became bitter to her, and she made preparations for death on a funeral pyre which she had constructed. When the circumstances were communicated to Jaidev, he appeared in time to hinder the immolation of the queen, and approaching the dead Padamavati sang his well-known ashtapadis. To the surprise and joy of all, she was restored to life, it is said, and joined her husband in his song.

Jaidev and his wife by this time had had sufficient experience of regal life. They were glad to abandon all state and return to their lowly home at Kenduli, where they enjoyed the society of saints and transferred their idolatrous devotion to the love and homage of the one true God.

On the anniversary of Jaidev's birth a religious fair is held at Kenduli, the poet's birthplace, and is attended by thousands of Vaishnavs who celebrate the occasion by assembling round his cenotaph for worship, and singing the most sublime portions of his immortal songs.

Bhagat Kabir Ji

**"From the One Light, the entire universe welled up.
So who is good, and who is bad?"**



Bhagat Kabir Ji was a revolutionary saint-poet of the Bhakti Movement. He emphasized the equality and fraternity of all mankind. Once Bhagat Kabir Ji was going to sell cloth he had made himself. He met some Sadhus (a renunciate spiritual devotee) on the way whom he gave the entire cloth free of cost.

Saint Kabir Das (kabir, Arabic for "great", dasa, Sanskrit for "slave" or "servant"), is widely acknowledged as one of the great personality of the Bhakti movement in North India. He was as is widely acknowledged born in Year 1398 A.D.(71 years before Guru Nanak). Kabirpanthis (followers of Kabir) say that he lived upto the age of 120 years and give date of his death as 1518, but relying on the research of Hazari Prasad Trivedi, a British Scholar Charlotte Vaudenville is inclined to lend credence to these dates and has proven that 1448 is probably the correct date of Saint Kabir's demise.

He is one of the medieval Indian saints of Bhakti and Sufi movement whose compositions figure in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. From among all of them, Kabir's contribution is the largest, 227 Padas in 17 ragas and 237 shlokas. Under each

raga or musical mode marking a section of the Holy Book, Kabir's hymns appear at the head of Bhagat Bani, a generic name for the works of contributors other than the Gurus. The presence of a substantial amount of Kabir's verse in the Sikh Scripture and chronologically he being the predecessor of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, led some Western scholars to describe him as the forerunner of Sikhism. Some have even called him the preceptor of Guru Nanak. There is, however, ample evidence to prove that Guru Nanak and Kabir had ever met; their periods of time in fact do not coincide. Kabir's compositions do figure in what are known as Goindval Pothis, anthologies of the hymns of the Gurus along with those of some of the Bhaktas prepared in the time of Guru AmarDas, Nanak III. They were included in the Guru Granth Sahib as well. But this happened much later when Guru Arjan, fifth in spiritual line from the Founder, compiled the Holy Book. Besides his own works and those of his four predecessors, he entered in it hymns of some saints and mystics, both Hindu and Muslim; Kabir was one of them.



Kabir lived in the fifteenth Century after Christ, which was a time of great political upheaval in India. As is true of many contemporary religious teachers, very little reliable information concerning Kabir's life is available, though there is no dearth of

legend gathering around him. Kabir's life was centred around Kashi, also called Banaras (Varanasi) Legend has it that he was actually the son of a Brahmin widow who abandoned him and that he was found by a Muslim weaver named Niru, who adopted the boy and taught him the weaver's trade. It is not clear whether he ever married, but tradition gives him a wife named Loi and two children. His caste was that of Julaha and from his sayings his caste's hereditary occupation of weaving. On the basis of modern research, it seems probable that Kabir belonged to a family of non-celibate yogis converted, not long before and to a considerable degree superficially to Islam. From the writings of Kabir it seems that his knowledge of Islam was slight, rather in his poetical utterances (Bani) a wealth of Hathayoga terminology and a thought structure which bears obvious resemblance to Nath Yogis. Nath Yogis in addition to the yogic conception that all truth is experimental, i.e. to be realized within the body with the aid of psycho-physical practices, concentration, control of breathing and thus making the body incorruptible and the yogis immortal.



Bhakti movement was started by hindu saints while Sufi mysticism by Muslim saints in medieval India (1200-1700). Kabir immensely contributed to the Bhakti Movement and is considered a pioneer of Bhakti along with Ravidas, Farid, and Namdev. His concept of love as a path of suffering may possibly indicate, in some measure, a debt to the Sufis. These and other elements from Nath tradition, bhakti and sufism, kabir combined with his own mystical nature and produced synthesis which is

the distinctive religion of Kabir. Tradition tells us that Swami Ramanand was his Guru (a teacher).

In fifteenth century, Benaras was the seat of Brahmin orthodoxy and their learning center. Brahmins had strong hold on all the spheres of life in this city. Thus Kabir belonging to a low caste of Julaha had to go through immense tough time of preaching his ideology. Kabir and his followers would gather at one place in the city and meditate. Brahmins ridiculed him for preaching to prostitutes and other low castes. Kabir satirically denounced Brahmins and thus won hearts of people around him. There is no doubt that single most famous important person from the city of Benaras today is none other than Saint Kabir.

Kabir through his couplets not only reformed the mindset of common villagers and low caste people but give them self confidence to question Brahmins. It was 100 years after him that Tulsidas broke the hegemony of Brahmins by writing Ram Charitra Manas, a poem of Ramayana at Benaras which went against the tradition of Brahmins. Kabir was in fact first person to go against Brahmins and be so successfull. Benaras was devastated by an attack by a Muslim invader Tamur Lang or "Tamur the lame" during his time. Kabir also denounced mullahs and their rituals of bowing towards kaba five times a day. Because of open condemnation of established and popular religoins, Kabir became an object of the wrath of both Hindus and Muslims in and around Benaras. Kabir travelled in and around Benaras to preach his beliefs.

Kabir believed in self-surrender and God's bhakti. The Kabirpanthis follow a lite of singing the praises of God, prayers and a simple and pure life of devotion. Kabir recommends ceaseless singing of God's praises. He virtually suggests withdrawal from the world. He is against al1 ritualistic and ascetic methods as means to salvation. It is true that Kabir refers to some yogic terms in describing the meditational and mystic methods of the yogis. But, there is no ground to suggest that he himself recommends the yogic path. In fact, far from recommending yoga, he is quite strong in condemning ascetic or yogic methods, and says that yogis, in their meditations, become prey to maya. The point will, however be considered further while comparing Radical bhakti with Nathism.

The moral tone is quite strong in Kabir's hymns. "Kabir deck thyself with garments of love. Love them is given honour whose body and soul speak the truth." "The ruby of goodness is greater than all the mines of rubies, all the wealth of three worlds resides in the goodness of heart. When the wealth of contentment is won, all other wealth is as dust." "Where there is mercy, there is strength, where there is forgiveness there is He." "The man who is kind and practises righteousness, who remains passive in the affairs of the world, who considers creatures of the world as his own self, he attains the immortal Being; the true God is ever with him. Kabir suggests inward worship and remembrance of God. For him, true worship is only inwards. Put on the rosary inward. By counting beads, the world will be full of light. He clearly suggests moral discrimination between good and bad deeds. What can the helpless road do, when the traveller does not walk understandingly. "What can one do, if, with lamp in hand, one falls in the well." "Or goes astray with open eyes. Discern ye now between good and evil."

It is not surprising that Kabir's satire was brought to bear not simply on the vices and weaknesses of men but reached through and beyond them to the very system themselves. It was the authority of Vedas and Quran that more than the authority of Brahmin or Qazi which Kabir attacked. He rebelled against the pretension of resolving by the means of books or by way of authority, the mystery of human conditions and the problem of liberation (Moksha). He spent his last 40 days living in a place where it was believed that if you die you will be born as a Donkey in next life.

Kabir is a firm advocate of ahimsa. His doctrine extends even to the nondestruction of flowers. "The life of the living you strike dead and you say your slaughter makes it dedicated. It is blood haunting you and those who taught you." "They fast all day, and at night they slaughter the owl; here murder, there devotion; how can this please God? O' Kazi, by whose order doth thou use thy knife." "When you declare the sacrifice of an animal as your religion, what else is sin. If you regard yourself a saint, whom will you call a butcher?" "The goat eats grass and is skinned, what will happen to those who eat (goat's) meat? "Do not kill poor jiva, murder will not be forgiven even if you hear a

million Puranas. Among the fifty commandments laid down for the followers of Kabir, vegetarianism is one of them. For Kabir, moral life involves adherence to ahimsa.

Kabir composed no systematic treatise, rather his work consists of many short didactic poems, often expressed in terse vigorous language in the form of Padas, Dohas, and Ramainis (forms of poetry in Indian languages). Besides his work recorded in 1604 A.D. in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev, Nanak V, and preserved inviolate since, two other collections exist - Kabir Granthavali, and Bijak. In his poems, he was quick to tell the illustrations of moral and spiritual truth in the incidents of everyday life, and many of his similes and metaphors are very striking.

Bhagat Kabir ji is ranked 5th as regards the volume of Bani contributed to SGGS ji, and from the 15 bhagats, he contributed the maximum number of hymns. His total contribution is 541 hymns set to 18 different musical measures (Ragas). Kabir has been accepted as the most revolutionary of all the saints of the Bhagati movement. He was the prominent disciple of Ramanand, and didn't hesitate to strike blows at futile religious observances & formalism. Ramanand once advised him to get up early in the morning & remember the Lord. This advice impressed him so much that he propagated this throughout his life, awakening masses from their daily slumber of ignorance and uniting them with the Lord.

The Brahmin lobby claim Kabir was born in Banaras to a Brahmin & was later brought up by a weaver couple-Ali Neeru and Neema- of Uttar Pradesh, who found the baby abandoned on the bank of Lahar Talan in the forest. This story seems to have been concocted by Pandits who often generally claim that scholars are born in their so-called high caste only. SGGS ji does not support these claims. SGGS ji on Panna 67, 328, 970 and 1364 amply clarify and leave no doubt whatsoever whom Kabir was.

As he came of age, he was married to a God-fearing maiden named Loi. She was the daughter of Neti, a noble-hearted weaver. Kabir and Loi had one son; Kamala and one daughter; Kamali. Kabir was attracted to Hinduism in his

younger days. His couplets and slokas impress upon man to become a good human being and treat all other as his equal. They are very effective in leading a person on the path of righteousness. According to Kabir, all human beings are Divine in essence. Thus, they are all equal. None of them is either good or bad. The same Divine spirit is manifested in all of them, and all that happens here is under His will.

Whoever dies, let him die such a death, that he does not have to die again. ||1||

Besides loving devotion which is the main and dominant theme of Kabir's Bani as included in SGGS ji, his aim was to free a man from the evil tendencies of ego, deceit, etc. based as they are on superstitions and futility. He criticises casteism, idolatry and empty ritualism. He had an undying urge to transform a person into a being who is noble and pious spiritually, socially and morally. To achieve his mission, Kabir openly denounced the false superstitions, rituals and practices, in all religions, that had no relevance with the upliftment of human soul with the help of convincing examples. In a hymn included at Aang 324 of SGGS ji, he ridicules the idea that mundan (ritual shaving off a Hindu child's hair) can lead to God-realisation. He says that had it been so, the sheep would have attained liberation several times in its life, since it undergoes the same ritual so often. Similarly, he counteracts the Brahmin's boast of high caste.

If you are indeed a Brahmin, by thy birth from a Brahmin mother,

then why didn't you come by some other way? ||2||

With the help of another example, he refused to accept the superior status of Brahmins:

How is it that you are a Brahmin, and I am of a low social status?

How is it that I am formed of blood, and you are made of milk? ||3||

Says Kabeer, one who contemplates God,

is said to be a Brahmin among us. ||4||7||

According to Bhagat Kabir, high family, high caste or high status are of no consequences on the path to God-realisation, rather they become hindrances. In a couplet, Kabir teaches mankind the vital message of reaching God, with the example from everyday life:

From this simple, but vital example, we learn that God-realisation requires 3 constituents:

- Guru
- Discarding of egotistical beastly temperament of an elephant
- Inculcating the humility of an ant

Bhagat Kabir has been equally straightforward while criticising some rituals of the Muslims. In a hymn he states; If a Muslim becomes deserving of heaven because of the sunnat (circumcision): what about their women folk?

According to a reference in S.L. Sondhi's book, Sant Kabir, Kabir relates an anecdote to make us aware of the purity of the water of the Ganges. Considering the Brahmin's claim that the water of the Ganga washes off all sins, Kabir hands over a bowl of such water to the Brahmins, but they refuse on the excuse that the bowl had become impure through the touch of a low caste man like Kabir. On this, Kabir satirises the Brahmins and says that if the water of the Ganga fails to keep the bowl pure, how can it purify our souls from all evils? The Brahmins have no answer to it.

Kabir ji was a dauntless mouthpiece of truth. His straightforwardness and truthful frankness resulted in both the Hindu Pandits & Muslim Quazis (priests of both religions) holding grudges against him. Consequently at the time when Sikander Lodhi arrived in his town, Kabir had to suffer many a humiliation at his hands because of the instigations given to him against Kabir, by the heads of both sects. But Kabir did not waiver, and bore all tortures and humiliations with calmness, accepting all these as His will. However, Kabir remained firm in his views. He has referred to this incident in his hymn included in the Scripture under Gaund measure.

Many attempts were made to torture Kabir to the point of submission, but Kabir ji was headstrong and took these tortures as His will. Ultimately, Sikander Lodhi was impressed by his personality, and out of respect to his wisdom and old age, acquitted him. Referring to Kabir's love for the Divine, deep faith and reverence for Him, Bhai Gurdas had said: "Brother! There is no difference between Lord Rama & Kabir (who has a oneness

with Him, though his bodily vesture gives him a separate entity)".

The followers of Kabir have come to be known as Kabir panthis. They have their principle centre at Kashi. Two of his disciples, Dharam Das and Surat Gopal have completed his compositions under the title 'Kabir Bijak'. However, 541 slokas of Kabir that find a place in SGGS ji are considered important because of their genuineness. Since the entire text of the Scripture has ever been inviolable, the text of Kabir's hymns therein has also remained intact and unaltered.

Kabir ever strived to cultivate in mankind the feelings of love, compassion and co-operation with others. Like many other great beings, he stressed the importance of a householder's life because this teaches mankind to live together and unites man intimately. Therefore, he has no hesitation in submitting to the Lord the 'memorandum of demands' for a happy household life.

*I Your humble servant shall perform
Your devotional worship service with love. ||3||*

He then goes on to say that he doesn't ask for these out of greed, rather these are the bare essentials of his life and none can do without them. Through this hymn, Kabir ji has beautifully shown us the precept of 'hand on job and heart in God'.

Giani Gian Singh, Sikh chronicler, writes that Kabir ji & Guru Nanak Dev ji met in 1506AD in village Pusa; this may have occurred during the latter years of his life, but there is no apparent proof for this.

The hymns composed by Kabir ji, even during the last years of his life when he was well over 100 years old, reflect his revolutionary spirit. According to him, the place where God's name is recited is pious, and there is no other basis of piety. Before discarding his bodily vesture, Kabir ji shifted his residence to Maghar. At the time, people believed that he who dies at Maghar suffer hell, and those that die in Kashi, enter heaven. Kabir ji braved this revolutionary and courageous deed to prove the futility of such notions. Guru Amar Das ji has strongly supported Kabir ji's stand in a hymn on Aang 491 of SGGS ji,

making it clear that visiting pilgrimages or breathing our last in any certain place carries no meaning as God resides in the mind.

Bhagat Namdev ji

**"In the imperishable realm of the Formless Lord,
I play the flute of the unstruck sound current."**



God's name was always on the lips of Bhagat Namdev Ji. He was asked by the king to show miracles. Bhagat Namdev Ji refused to do so and was thrown before a drunk elephant to be crushed to death. God saved His own saint. Bhagat Namdev Ji spent the last day of his life in village Guman, now in district Gurdaspur, Punjab (India).

Guru Granth Sahib recognizes many saints of the Bhakti movement of medieval India. Namdev are the saints belonging to this movement which swept across the North India from 1100 A.D. till 1600 A.D. When Fifth Guru Guru Arjan dev ji compiled Guru Granth Sahib, he decided to give some recognition to the saints of Bhakti movement, that is the reason that Guru Granth Sahib contains verses of such saints. In some cases Guru Granth Sahib is the only voice remained for such saints over the years.

According to the generally accepted version of the current traditions, Namdev was born in AD 1270 to Damasheti, a low-caste tailor, and his wife, Gonabai, in the village of Naras-Vamani, in Satara district of Maharashtra. Janabai, the family's maidservant and a bhakta and poetess in her own right, records

the tradition that Namdev was born to Gonabai as a result of her worship of Vitthala in Pandharpur. Namdev was married before he was eleven years of age to Rajabal, daughter of Govinda sheti Sadavarte. He had four sons and one daughter, Under the influence of saint Jnanadeva, Namdev was converted to the path of bhakti. Vitthala of Pandharpur was now the object of his devotion and he spent much of his time in worship and kirtan, chanting mostly verses of his own composition. In the company of Jnanadeva and other saints, he roamed about the country and later came to the Punjab where he is said to have lived for more than twenty years at Ghuman, in Gurdaspur district, where a temple in the form of samadh still preserves his memory. This temple was constructed by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and the tank by its side was got repaired by Rani Sada Kaur , mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh .

In his early fifties, Namdev settled down at Pandharpur where he gathered around himself a group of devotees. His abhangas or devotional lyrics became very popular, and people thronged to listen to his kirtan. Namdev's songs have been collected in Namdevachi Gatha which also includes the long autobiographical poem Tirathavah. His Hindi verse and his extended visit to the Punjab carried his fame far beyond the borders of Maharashtra. Sixty-one of his hymns in fact came to be included in Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. These hymns or sabdas share the common characteristic of lauding the One Supreme God distinct from his earlier verse which carries traces of idolatry and saguna bhakti. In the course of his spiritual quest, Namdev had, from being a worshipper of the Divine in the concrete form, become a devotee of the attributeless (nirguna) Absolute.

Bhagat Nam Dev is a pioneer of the Radical bhakti School. Though he appeared a century earlier than Kabir, his religious and social views are very much like those of Kabir. He unambiguously repudiates all the four fundamentals of Vaisnavism. Though in his devotional approach, he is clearly a monotheist, he makes many pantheistic statements too, e.g., every thing is God; there is nothing but God; consider the world and God to be one; the foam and the water are not different. Chaturvedi writes: "Sant Nam Dev seemed to believe both in transcendence and immanence, in pantheism and nondualism.

His devotion was purely of the non-attributional absolute. He also considers God to be immanent, everywhere, in all hearts, and the Creator of everything. Like Kabir and the Sufis, Namdev is very other worldly. He says, "The strength of contempt of the world should be in the body an unchanging companion. One should lay aside differences between oneself and others, and feel no anxiety for things of the world." Ranade also writes: "He (Nam Dev) tells us that it is impossible that the pursuit of God can be coupled with a life of Samsara. If it had been possible for a man to find God while he was pursuing Samsara, then Sanaka and others would not have grown mad after God. If it had been possible for him to see God while carrying on the duties of a householder, the great Suka would not have gone to the forest to seek God. Had it been possible for people to find God in their homes, they would not have left them to find out. Nam Dev has left all these things, and is approaching God in utter submission (Abhg. 83).



NamDev's cosmogenic views are also orthodox. He says that God created maya and "maya is the name of the power that placeth man in the womb." Indirectly, he is neither happy with the world, nor with the human birth. Him, shop, shopkeeper, men and everything are unreal excepting God. In this background he seeks release from the world and suggests renunciation: "Namdev gave up trade, and devoted himself exclusively to the worship of God.

The world being a play of maya and not being a worthwhile of spiritual endeavours, Namdev's goal is to have union with God through devotion and singing. His praises. He says, "I perform worship, sing God's praises and meditate on Him for eight pahar in a day i.e, round the clock. At the same time, he suggests good conduct and purity of life. For, God created all men alike. Though he holds every person responsible for his acts, he clearly does not believe in a world rigidly governed by karma. 13because he says: If everything were determined by karma, who created karma originally?

NamDev not only claims union with God, but, like Kabir, also states that more than once God miraculously intervened on his behalf to reveal Himself to him, or help him. Without doubt, Nam Dev's approach remains otherworldly both before and after his achievement. At one time, he even gave up work so as to remain absorbed in his worship and meditations. He never initiated any religious institution or movement. His was a solitary search for God, without creating any social or religious organisation.

We find that in his repudiation of Vaisnava doctrines, in his metaphysical ideas, methodology and goal, and more particularly in his otherworldly approach to the world and society, Namdev's views are quite identical with those of Kabir.

Shabad by Bhagat Nam Dev in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib where the temple rotated towards his direction as he was not allowed to sit in there.

Laughing and playing, I came to Your Temple, O Lord.

While Naam Dayv was worshipping, he was grabbed and driven out. || 1 ||

I am of a low social class, O Lord;

why was I born into a family of fabric dyers? || 1 || Pause

||

I picked up my blanket and went back, to sit behind the temple. || 2 ||

As Naam Dayv uttered the Glorious Praises of the Lord, the temple turned around to face the Lord's humble devotee. || 3 || 6 |

Shabad by Bhagat Nam Dev in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib on how he had the darshan of the Lord.

*Nam Dev milked the brown cow,
and brought a cup of milk and a jug of water to his family
god. || 1 ||
Please drink this milk, O my Sovereign Lord God. Drink
this milk and my mind will be happy.
Otherwise, my father will be angry with me. || 1 || Pause
||
Taking the golden cup, Nam Dev filled it with the
ambrosial milk,
and placed it before the Lord. || 2 ||
The Lord looked upon Nam Dev and smiled.
This one devotee abides within my heart. || 3 ||
The Lord drank the milk, and the devotee returned home.
Thus did Nam Dev come to receive the Blessed Vision of
the Lord's Darshan. || 4 || 3 ||*

Another Article on Bhagat NamdevJi

Bhagat Namdev Ji (29 October, 1270 - 1350) (Gurmukhi: ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ) was born on October 29, 1270 in the state of Maharashtra village of Naras-Vamani, in Satara district (presently called Narsi Namdev). His father, a calico printer/tailor, was named Damshet and his mother's name was Gonabai. Most of the spiritual message of Bhagat Namdev, just like our gurus', emphasized the importance of living the life of a householder (grist Jivan) and that through marriage and having a family one could attain enlightenment. He emphasized that the truest form of bandage or devotional meditation, is to enter matrimony and jointly seek the holy experience Waheguru.

Background

Namdev was married before he was eleven years of age to Rajabal, daughter of Govinda Sheti Sadavarte. They had four sons and one daughter. Janabai, the family's maidservant and a bhagat and poetess in her own right, records the tradition that Namdev was born to Gonabai as a result of her worship of Vitthala in Pandharpur. This present temple building was constructed by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and the tank by its side was repaired by Rani Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

God's name was always on the lips of Bhagat Namdev Ji. He was asked by the king to show miracles. He refused to do so and was thrown before a drunk elephant to be crushed to death. God saved His own bhagat. When the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan dev compiled the Guru Granth Sahib, he decided to give some recognition to the bhagats of the Bhakti movement. This is the reason that Guru Granth Sahib contains verses of fifteen such bhagats. In some cases Guru Granth Sahib is the only voice remaining for such bhagats over the years.

Follows Bhakti Marg

Under the guiding of Janadeva, Namdev was converted to the path of Bhagati. He became a disciple of Bhagat Naneshwar, a holy man of Maharashtra. Namdev married to Raj Bai, who came from a respectable business family, and lived a householder's life. He had four sons and a daughter. His parents (father: Damesh and mother: Gona Bai) remained occupied in various odd jobs to make both ends meet. However, his maternal grandfather, who was a deep devotee of Tahkur (Stone deity), left an indelible impression on young Namdev's mind. Once, his maternal grandfather asked Namdev that he should offer milk to the Tahkur in his absence away from home. Namdev persisted with his prayer and submission before the deities to accept his offer of milk with such devotion that God Himself intervened and entered the deities to accede the prayer of his devotee. This happened at Pandarpur. Namdev later on refers to this incident in his hymn:

Taking the golden cup, Nam Dev filled it with the
ambrosial milk,
and placed it before the Lord. ||2||
The Lord looked upon Nam Dev and smiled. "This one
devotee abides within my heart." ||3||
The Lord drank the milk, and the devotee returned
home.
Thus did Nam Dev come to receive the Blessed Vision of
the Lord's Darshan. ||4||3||

This immense devotion created such a fountain as it formed a huge pool of admirers for Namdev, who then saw God in each being. His devotion reached such a pitch that, once a dog

ran away, snatching his food. Namdev chased the beast with a tin of ghee (butter oil) in hand saying:

O Bhagat of God! Stop a while and let me smear the loaves with butter oil, otherwise how would you eat the course parts!

Vitthala of Pandharpur was another object of Namdev's devotion and he spent much of his time in worship and kirtan, chanting mostly verses of his own composition. In the company of Janadeva and others, he roamed about the country and later came to the Punjab where he is said to have lived for more than twenty years at Ghoman, in Gurdaspur district, where a temple in the form of samadh still preserves his memory.

In his early fifties, Namdev settled down at Pandharpur where he gathered around himself a group of devotees. His abhangas or devotional lyrics became very popular, and people thronged to listen to his kirtan. Namdev's songs have been collected in Namdevachi Gatha which also includes the long autobiographical poem Tirathavah.

His Hindi verse and his extended visit to the Punjab carried his fame far beyond the borders of Maharashtra. Sixty-one of his hymns in fact came to be included in the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. These hymns or shabads share the common characteristic of lauding the One Supreme God distinct from his earlier verse which carries traces of idolatry and saguna bhakti. In the course of his spiritual quest, Namdev had, from being a worshipper of the Divine in the concrete form, become a devotee of the attribute-less (nirguna) Absolute.

Remembrance of God's Name central

Bhagat Nam Dev is a pioneer of the Radical bhakti School. Though he appeared a century earlier than Kabir, his religious and social views are very much like those of Kabir. He unambiguously repudiates all the four fundamentals of Vaisnavism. Though in his devotional approach, he is clearly a monotheist, he makes many pantheistic statements too, e.g., every thing is God; there is nothing but God; consider the world and God to be one; the foam and the water are not different. Chaturvedi writes: "Sant Namdev seemed to believe both in transcendence and immanence, in pantheism and nondualism.

His devotion was purely of the non-attributional absolute. He also considers God to be immanent, everywhere, in all hearts, and the Creator of everything. Like Kabir and the Sufis, Namdev is very other worldly. He says, "The strength of contempt of the world should be in the body an unchanging companion.

Message of Unity for All

One should lay aside differences between oneself and others, and feel no anxiety for things of the world. Ranade also writes: "He (Namdev) tells us that it is impossible that the pursuit of God can be coupled with a life of Samsara. If it had been possible for a man to find God while he was pursuing Samsara, then Sanaka and others would not have grown mad after God. If it had been possible for him to see God while carrying on the duties of a householder, the great Suka would not have gone to the forest to seek God. Had it been possible for people to find God in their homes, they would not have left them to find out. Nam Dev has left all these things, and is approaching God in utter submission." (Abhg. 83)



Bhagat Namdev thrown before a drunk elephant

Namdev's cosmogenic views are also orthodox. He says that God created maya and "maya is the name of the power that placeth man in the womb." Indirectly, he is neither happy with the world, nor with human birth. To him, shop, shopkeeper, men and everything are unreal excepting God. Against this

background he sought release from the world and suggested renunciation: "Namdev gave up trade, and devoted himself exclusively to the worship of God".

The world being a play of maya and not being a worthwhile arena for spiritual endeavours, Namdev's goal was to have union with God through devotion and singing His praises. He says, "I perform worship, sing God's praises and meditate on Him for eight pahar in a day i.e, round the clock. At the same time, he suggests good conduct and purity of life. For, God created all men alike. Though he holds every person responsible for his acts, he clearly does not believe in a world rigidly governed by karma. Because he says: If everything were determined by karma, who created karma originally?

Namdev not only claims union with God, but, like Kabir, also states that more than once God miraculously intervened on his behalf to reveal Himself to him, or help him. Without doubt, Nam Dev's approach remains otherworldly both before and after his achievement. At one time, he even gave up work so as to remain absorbed in his worship and meditations. He never initiated any religious institution or movement. His was a solitary search for God, without creating any social or religious organisation.

We find that in his repudiation of Vaisnava doctrines, in his metaphysical ideas, methodology and goal, and more particularly in his otherworldly approach to the world and society, Namdev's views are quite identical with those of Kabir. The shabad by Bhagat Nam Dev in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib where the temple rotated towards his direction as he was not allowed to sit in there.

Gurdwara and Temple



Temple in Pandharpur, where the Eastern entrance is called
Namdev Gate

Ghoman is situated about 26 km Southeast of Batala city and about 10 km from Sri Hargobindpur. It is towards west side of Sri Hargobindpur. Ghoman is associated with Baba Namdev (1270-1350). Baba Namdev was the founder of this town and meditated here for 17 long years. Here he did miraculous deeds. The eastern entrance to this temple is known as the Namdev gate (after the great 13th century Vaishnava bhagat). The sanctum enshrines the standing image of Vithoba also known as Panduranga, Pandhari or Vitthala. Stylistically the image dates back to the 5th century.

There are inscriptions in this temple dating back to the 13th century which place origin of this shrine to the 6th century.



Gurdwara at Ghoman

Profession of Chhimba

Bhagat Namdev is referred to as a chhimba, "chhīpro", "Chhīpè" and "chhīpa". This refers to Bhagat ji's profession as a printer of cloth. Chhippas were calico printers/artists and used to decorate, colour and print textiles with art work. Some of them were also tailors as this was a profession connected with clothes.

Faith

"In the imperishable realm of the Formless Lord, I play the flute of the unstruck sound current."

Bhagat Namdev's contemporaries looked upon him solely as a low caste man. However, he was blessed with a unique deep love for, and firm faith in, the Divine. Consequently, he

happened to rule over the hearts of God-loving people. Guru Ram Das ji acknowledges his uniquely beautiful love for the Divine and refers to it in one of his hymns:

Nam Dev loved the Lord; the people called him a fabric
dyer.

The Lord turned His back on the high-class Kh'shaatriyas
and Brahmins, and showed His face to Nam Dev. ||3||

This implies that being aware of Namdev's selfless love, God turned his back on the higher caste Khatri and Brahmins and embraced low caste Namdev, a calico printer. Guru Arjan Sahib ji held him in such high esteem as he declared that Namdev was one with God because he ever remembered Him.

For such a pious soul, none was alien. However, this innocent pious and unprejudiced attitude, coupled with universal admiration; became the cause of jealousy for the high caste Brahmins. Consequently, Namdev had to bear the brunt of their displeasure at every step. So much so that once this pious being, who was ever mystically attained with God, was thrown out of the temple for being a low caste. This happened in the temple of Nag Nath in the village of Aund; situated in Dist. Parbani, in Maharashtra. It was in this temple that Namdev, blissfully fixated on Naam, wanted to sing hymns in eulogy of God. The so-called high caste priests in the temple snatched castanets from him and threw him out. This humble devotee of God, had heartfelt sadness at this. In fact, due to the union between God and His humble devotee, it is said that through Divine intervention, the temple moved to face him, despite his sitting outside. This incident is referred to in a hymn in the SGGS:

Laughing and playing, I came to Your Temple, O Lord.
While Nam Dev was worshipping, he was grabbed and
driven out. ||1||

I am of a low social class, O Lord;
why was I born into a family of fabric dyers?

||1||Pause||

I picked up my blanket and went back,
to sit behind the temple. ||2||

As Nam Dev uttered the Glorious Praises of the Lord,

the temple turned around to face the Lord's humble devotee. ||3||6||

Although Brahmins and other sham "devotees" experienced only humiliation and slight with this happening, yet they could not, even then, extinguish from their hearts the fire of jealousy for Namdev. Rather, they availed themselves of another opportunity to incite Emperor Mohammed Tughlak against him. The emperor then asked Namdev to prove his spiritual power by reviving a dead cow. Namdev refused to interfere in the will of his beloved Lord. His plain refusal infuriated the emperor as a result of which, he was immediately arrested and tortured in many ways. However, nothing could make Namdev waiver in his devotion, and he remained focussed on God.

The emperor then decreed that since he didn't revive the dead cow, he should accept Islam. Namdev boldly and flatly refused to accept either of his orders. Many of his admirers and well-wishers tried to impress upon him to accept either option to save his life, but Namdev was adamant in his stand. At last, his grief-stricken mother suggested that since there was no difference between Allah and Ram (2 names given by Muslims and Hindus, respectively, to God), he should have no problem in accepting Allah, his ultimate ideal. Moreover, she had heard him saying that Allah, Ram, Rahim, are attributive names of the same Lord, so he should have no difficulties repeating Allah's name instead. A verse of Namdev reads:

Nam Dev's mother began to cry, and she said, "Why don't you abandon your Lord Raam, and worship his Lord Allah?" ||6||

In answer to this, Namdev asked his mother to refrain from pressing him to say Allah instead of Ram, telling her he was fully aware of her motherly love for him, which was causing her to try to save his life. He further warned her against such emotional pressure, that otherwise he would not consider himself as her son, due to her attachment to him. A verse of Namdev reads;

Naam Dev answered, "I am not your son, and you are not my mother."

He further tried to convince his mother by stating, "When I repeated Allah's name, it is by my own free will, my inner self's wish. For me, God is one whom people remember through varied names. However, I will not surrender to a royal decree to remember God by this particular Name and not by any other Name. I shall not say so under the emperor's order, even if I may say the same thing of my own free will." To Namdev, it was a question of freedom.

His mother continued, wailing that for her sake, could he at least revive the dead cow and save his life. Namdev was patiently adamant, he told her that it does not behove a man of God to interfere in the Divine Will and that he would be happy in His Will. She then, stopped pressing him due to the obvious strength of his convictions. It is said that a miracle happened at that time: the cow came back to life, such is the tie between God and devotee, thus, the life and honour of Namdev had been preserved. Namdev milked the cow in the presence of a large gathering that has assembled there and presented this milk to the emperor. At this, the emperor sought forgiveness from God's devotee and was apologetic. He offered to fulfil any material wish of Namdev. Since Namdev had so little temptation for material goods and bore no grudge, Namdev only advised the king to provide true justice to his subjects. In fact, this is the duty of a king. Mohammed Tughlak was very sorry and this made him conscious of his duties as a king. This particular event was related to, by Namdev in the SGGS:

The Sultan said, "Listen, Nam Dev: Let me see the actions of your Lord."||1||

If the emperor challenged Namdev to prove his devotion to Ram, he felt happy in the Divine will of a reviving a cow and called his deity Bithal, meaning 'Protector of the Ignorant'. In a flash, God put a question to Namdev: When you were made to suffer tortures in the confinement under imperial orders, you bore everything with patience and equanimity, but you could not face your expulsion from the temple in the same spirit, Why? Namdev is said to have replied that pain caused to his body is his personal, but when his soul is hurt it involves faith, his God

as well. How could one bear insult for the deity in the house of deity itself? God was pleased with Namdev's answer. There is another hymn, by Namdev which begins with the following verse:

When I see Him, I sing His Praises. Then I, his humble
servant, become patient. ||1||
Herein we find Namdev eulogising God after having a
direct communication with Him. He explains this
encounter by referring to God as light effulgent:
The skinless drum plays.
Without the rainy season, the clouds shake with
thunder.
Without clouds, the rain falls,
if one contemplates the essence of reality. ||1||
I have met my Beloved Lord.
Meeting with Him, my body is made beautiful and
sublime. ||1||Pause||

The selected few verses from Namdev's hymns, as quoted above, testify his deep faith in the Divine, who he describes as all-powerful and being capable of doing whatever he desires. So long as we live separated from God, this life seems burdensome, but as one realises oneness with Him, no pain really hurts. It is like a pitcher, which does not seem heavy even though filled with water so long as it remains in the ocean. As we take the pitcher out, it drains our strength and becomes a burden. Namdev gives the example of his own life to exhort us that no true devotee of God ever gives up his own faith in God as a result of any pain, operation, cruelty or material temptation. God also reaches His devotees, His worshippers and saves their honour, protects them and glorifies them in the Truth.

So far as the question of Namdev's competence to clear and explain a point is concerned, he was rather proficient in explaining any point in a very interesting and rational manner. In this context, some of his padas (couplets) make interesting reading. These padas are known as abhang, and their language is Marathi.

Namdev visited numerous centres of pilgrimage so that he could share with the maximum number of people the limitless power of God as he realised it. Finally, he came to Punjab, accompanied by Gian Dev. He made the village of Ghoman, in Gurdaspur district, his dwelling place. He stayed there for about ten years, and it was here that he breathed his last in 1350AD. Most of Namdev's hymns that are included in the SGGS ji were possibly composed here; the language of these is either Punjabi, or greatly influenced by it.

Namdev was a holy-man who travelled from Maharashtra to Punjab and gave the natives of Punjab, a message of love. Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgharia erected a memorial at Ghoman in commemoration of Namdev's work. A large fair is held there in January (2 Magh) every year. Sada Kaur also got a holy tank dug there. Now many more elegant buildings have come up at that place, constructed by his followers. Several organisations have engaged in spreading Namdev's spiritual and humanitarian message to the peoples. Namdev has summed up his entire message as follows:

Within all hearts, the Lord speaks, the Lord speaks.
Who else speaks, other than the Lord? ||1||Pause||

The tradition of holding fairs in Ghoman in his honour testifies that Punjabis took to Namdev's message of love with equal intensity. They have not only remembered what he said but have actively followed his tenets.

A total of 61 hymns of Namdev are extant in SGGS ji which are included under 18 different musical measures. Namdev is categorical in saying that it is Guru's grace alone which can clear man's all doubts and enable him to swim across the world-ocean; the spiritual journey of life.

In the beginning of his life, Namdev was no doubt a vaishnavite, but his hymns in SGGS ji make it very abundantly clear that he became an ardent devotee of the formless Lord. Ultimately, his soul merged in the same Nirankar or formless Lord.

Touching the philosopher's stone, I have been transformed into gold.

Bhagat Parmanand ji



PARMANAND, a Mahārashtrian saint-poet, one of whose hymns is included in the Guru Granth Sāhib. Born probably in 1483, he is believed to have resided at Bārsi, situated to the north of Pandharpur, in present-day Sholāpur district of Mahārāshtra. Parmānand was a devotee of Vishnu and used in his songs the nom de plume Sarañg, the name of a bird ever thirsty for the raindrop. He always longed for God whom he worshipped in the Vaisnavite manifestation of Krsna. He used to make, it is said, seven hundred genuflexions daily to God on his uncovered, often bleeding, knees. He believed for a long time that God could be worshipped as an Image only, but later he had the realization that the nirguna Supreme, God unmanifest, could also be loved and prayed to.

Parmanand's one hymn incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib (p. 1253) subscribes to this view. In this hymn, he disapproves of the ritualistic reading and hearing of the sacred books if that has not disposed to the service of fellow beings. He commends sincere devotion which could be imbibed from the company of holy saints. Lust, wrath, avarice, slander have to be expunged for they render all seva, i.e. service, fruitless.

Shabad from Parmanand in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib

So what have you accomplished by listening to the Puraanas?

*Faithful devotion has not welled up within you,
and you have not been inspired to give to the hungry. ||*

1 || Pause ||

*You have not forgotten sexual desire,
and you have not forgotten anger; greed has not left you
either.*

*Your mouth has not stopped slandering and gossiping
about others.*

Your service is useless and fruitless. || 1 ||

*By breaking into the houses of others and robbing them,
you fill your belly, you sinner.*

*But when you go to the world beyond, your guilt will be
well known,*

by the acts of ignorance which you committed. || 2 ||

Cruelty has not left your mind;

you have not cherished kindness for other living beings.

*Parmaanand has joined the Saadh Sangat, the Company
of the Holy.*

Why have you not followed the sacred teachings? || 3 ||

1 || 6 ||

*O mind, do not even associate with those who have turned
their backs on the Lord.*

Bhagat Pipa ji



PIPA, one of whose hymns is incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib, was a prince who renounced his throne in search of spiritual solace. He was born at Gagaraun, in present-day Jhalawar district of Rajasthān, about AD 1425. He was a devotee of the goddess Bhavāni whose idol was enshrined in a temple within the premises of his palace. The goddess, it is said, once told him in a dream to visit Kāshi (Vārānasi) and receive initiation from Rāmānand. Pipā went to Kāshi, but Rāmānand refused to see him in his gaudy robes. Pipā cast off his royal apparel and put on a mendicant's garment. He returned home after initiation and began to live like an ascetic. At his invitation Rāmānand visited Gagaraun, and the raja lent his shoulder to the palanquin carrying him in a procession. Pipa now finally decided to give up his throne and retire to a life of seclusion and meditation. He went to Dwarkā (Gujarāt) where Lord Krishna, after the Mahābhārata war, had spent the last years of his life. All the twelve wives of Pipa insisted on accompanying him, but he took along only one, named Sitā, who was of a pious temperament. He selected a cave for his residence from where he daily walked through a tunnel to the temple of Krsna on the sea coast. The temple is still a popular place of pilgrimage. and a fair is held there annually in Pipa's memory. After what he thought was a personal encounter with the Lord, he gave up idol-worship. He and his companion-wife started living in a jungle. After a period

of penance, he set out roaming about the country to serve the common people. He, along with his wife, sang hymns and prayers of his own composition and collected money to be distributed among the poor. He fed the mendicants and treated them as God's chosen ones. From an idol-worshipper (saguna bhakta) Pipā became a worshipper of the Formless One (nirguna devotee). As he says in his hymn in the Guru Granth Sāhib, the body itself is the Supreme Being's temple (káiau deval). One need not make stone images of Him and burn incense or light candles in front of them.

Two collections of Pipa's sayings are known to exist, namely Shñ Pipa ji Bani and Sarab Gutaka, both in manuscript form. Pipā Math, a monastery in Dwārkā, honours his memory.

Shabad by Bhagat Pipa

Within the body, the Divine Lord is embodied.

The body is the temple, the place of pilgrimage, and the pilgrim.

Within the body are incense, lamps and offerings.

Within the body are the flower offerings. || 1 ||

*I searched throughout many realms,
but I found the nine treasures within the body.*

Nothing comes, and nothing goes;

I pray to the Lord for Mercy. || 1 || Pause ||

The One who pervades the Universe also dwells in the body;

whoever seeks Him, finds Him there.

Pipa prays, the Lord is the supreme essence;

He reveals Himself through the True Guru.

Saith Nanak: The true gold-tester is one who his own self to the test puts. A wise physician is one who has knowledge of malady and its cure.

Guru Amar Das, in his composition Anand (Stanza 14) has acquainted us about the nature of Bhagatas i.e God's devotees. He says:

Different from the world is the way of God's devotees-
Different the devotees' way, traversing a hard path.
Discarding covetousness, greed, pride, desire-

Restrained their utterance.
Sharper than dagger-point, finer than hair-breadth
Is the way they traverse.
Those that by the Master's grace
have egoism discarded,
Their desire into the Lord is absorbed.
Saith Nanak : Age after age God's devotees tread
way from the world different. SGGS-918

Such description of the unique way of life of the saints are found at several places on the pages of history. There we read that these holy-men in their deep devotion & dedication to God kissed the red hot iron-plates; embraced the equally hot pillars; discarded the crown and throne in favour of an austere life in jungles dedicated to Divine worship; and retained the tie of love with God intact even after sacrificing everything. In the long list of the devotees of God there is a name known as Pipa. He was a king of Gagrion garh, situated at about 50 miles to the east of Kotanagar in the present-day Jhalawar district of Rajasthan State. He was born in a Chauhan rajput family in AD 1426 (1483 Samvat). According to the British historian of Sikhism, J.D. Cunningham, he was the ninth descendant of Raja Jaitpal. However, Giani Gian Singh, Twarikh Guru Khalsa (Part-1, p. 143) gives 1462 Bikrami as the year of his birth. It is also stated in this work that Pipa was born at Jhala, and spent his entire life at Patan in meditation of God: this Patan town is situated near Jodhpur in Rajasthan. Since Pipa came of a royal family, he enjoyed all the pleasures and comforts of a royal life and his life were full of all sorts of physical enjoyments. In the true royal custom, he married a dozen beautiful maidens who lived with him in his palace as his queens. In spite of all this, a spark of Divine love was still alive in his heart. He was a devotee of goddess, Durga, the deity in which he perceived the divine reflection. He also took time from courtly cares and pleasures of flesh to spend it in the company of the holy persons. These later persuaded him that the special efforts need to be made to realize God. So he resolved to go to Ramanand to seek spiritual guidance.

At that time Ramanand was held in high esteem in the religious circles. Pipa set out for Kashi in company with several of his queens and attendants. But Ramanand refused to see him

and accept him as his disciple saying that those desirous of seeking the company of the saints must first discard their ego of worldly position, power and self. That is the only means by which distinction of high and low could be obliterated. Pipa realized his lapse. So he sent the caravan consisting of his wives and servants back to his palace and presented himself before the saint with all humility. Thus was he able to seek the discipleship of Ramanand. Then under the influence and guidance of Ramanand, Pipa dedicated himself with renewed devotion to the worship of God. The Vaishnava cult was gaining popularity in those days, and naturally Pipa was also inclined towards this trend. As the love for God gained in its intensity, the pomp and show of royalty, seemed faded and jaded to him, At last he renounced the crown and set out on pilgrimage in the company of his youngest wife, Sita. Gradually he became totally indifferent to worldly position and self. It is said that one early morning as he was going for a bath in the river he saw on the way an urn full of gold coins. The following day Pipa took another route to reach the river saying maya (wealth) has occupied that path. Thus, he never allowed maya to dominate over his heart,, and also he never lost humility of heart. This had, in fact, become a peculiar trait of his temperament. There still exists in Dwarka a famous math (monastery) called Pipa Vatt in memory of Pipa where discourse is daily given on the life and teachings of Pipa.

There is only one hymn of Pipa included in the Guru Granth Sahib, under Dhanasri musical measure, on page 695. This hymn has made the saint immortal. In this hymn Pipa has denounced the dualism, and instead he advises man to realize the ultimate Reality. For this purpose one need' not wander in forests. If that ultimate Reality (God) is in the forest, He is in the human heart as well. Therefore, it becomes easier for a person to discover Him from within. It becomes obvious therefore that man must peep into his innerself. This can be possible only through the grace of God. However, this is possible to achieve while living in this world and carrying out one's filial and social obligations.

With the help of his hymn Pipa showed the true path to humanity lead astray in its ignorance. He says that a peep inside can help man realize his true self. He has been bold enough to say that instead of worshipping the idols or deities in temples by

burning lamps or incense and making offers, one should remember and worship God residing within him, and he should offer prayer to Him. His hymn would read as follows:

The self is itself the deity, the self the temple;
The self too the wandering ascetic and pilgrim.
The self is incense, the lamp and the offering,
The self the flower-offering.

In searching through the continents of the self
are obtained the Nine Treasures.

The Lord be my witness ! nothing is born or dies. (Pause)
Whatever is in the cosmos is present too in the self
Whoever seeks, attains this secret.

States Pipa in humility: The Lord is Supreme Essence
The holy Preceptor realization of this grants.

SGGS-695

Two collections of Pipa's sayings are known to exist, namely Shri Pipa Ji Bani and Sarab Gutka, both in manuscript form. (ref. the encyclopaedia of Sikhism Vol. III, page 342)

Not much biographical information about Pipa is available. It is, therefore, not possible to specify the place of his demise. It is, however, believed that he died in 1562 AD at the ripe old age of 136 years. This was the time when Guru Amar Das, the third descendant on Guru Nanak's throne, shed spiritual light to lead mankind on the way to spiritual and moral progression.

There is no exaggeration in the belief that devotees of God never die with their physical death. They are immortal as they remain ever alive through their pious utterances and noble deeds in the hearts of well-wishers of humanity.

Another Article on Bhagat Pipa Ji

Bhagat Pipa, also known as Raja Pipaji or Rao Pipa or Sardar Pipa or Pipa Bairagi or Pipanand Acharya, was a mystic poet, Rajput ruler turned bhagat and one of devotees whose hymns is incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib. Venerated in region of Punjab, among Sikhs his devotional hymn is widely quoted by most of preachers. Since childhood, He was a Sakta follower,

thereafter adopted Vaishnavism in company of Ramananda and then adopted Gurmat way of life. His hymn is considered among one of influences of Bhakti movement in India.

Early Life

Raja Pipaji was born, as Pratap Rao, at Gagaron, in present-day Jhalawar district of Rajasthan in a Khichi Chauhan Rajput family. His great grandfather King Jaitpal obtained possession of Gagron by killing Kamal-Ud-Din, Governor. Raja Pipaji was successor of Rao Khandwa and ruled Gagron possibly between 1360 to 1385.

He had 12 queens among those Rani Sita was his devout lady and was very dear to him. Sita was daughter of King Haja Solanki of Toda Rai Singh in District Tonk. Her name was Padmavati which was changed to Sita after marriage.

Shakta King to Bairagi Ascetic

As ancestors were worshiper of Goddess Bhavani, he continued worshipping Bhavani in the form an Idol with eight arms holding weapons, bearing the head of the slain demon Mahishasura. He accepted Bairagi faith later on under influence of Ramananda.

Ramananda was following tyaga section of Ramanuja's Bairagi tradition, when this historical encounter occurred in Kashi and was ascetic rely upon meditation and strict ascetic practices and also believe that the grace of god is required for them to achieve liberation.

When King Pipa went to Benaras, Ramananda refused to see him in his gaudy robes. Pipa cast off his royal apparel and put on a mendicant's garment. He returned home after initiation and began to live like an ascetic. At his invitation Ramanand visited Gagrongarh, and the Raja lent his shoulder to the palanquin carrying him in a procession. After conversion to Bairagi, one has to adopt the following karmas:

1. Pilgrimage to Dwarka
2. Shankha, Chakra etc. Symbols on body
3. Tilaka of Gopichand

4. Worshipping Idols of Krishna and Rama
5. Putting Bead garland of Tulsi around Neck

Pipa devoutly follow all of above Karmas. Pipa now finally decided to give up his throne and retire to a life of seclusion and meditation. He went to Dwarka (Gujrat) where Lord Krishna, after the Mahabharata war, had spent the last years of his life. All the twelve wives of Pipa insisted on accompanying him, but he took along only one, named Sita, who was of a pious temperament. He selected a cave for his residence from where he daily walked through a tunnel to the temple of Krishna on the sea coast. The temple is still a popular place of pilgrimage. and a fair is held there annually in Pipa's memory. After what he thought was a personal encounter with the Lord, he gave up idol-worship.

Bairagi to Strict Monotheism

Though, the prevalent belief is that Ramananda and some of his disciples got converted by Kabir from Bairagi denomination to strict monotheism. Kabir was disciple of Ramananda and when he was not getting any spiritual benefit, Seeking the same he shifted to Maghar and studied Vedas. After attaining spiritual wisdom and essence of vedas, he returned Kashi and discussed his essence with Ramananda and other disciples including Pipaji. They started understang his wisdom and thoughts were accepted by all and everyone left Idolatry and Karmic philosophy thereafter.

From an Idol worshiper, Pipaji turned worshiper of the Formless One. As he says in his hymn in the Guru Granth Sahib, the subtle body itself is the Supreme Being's temple (kaiau deval) and one need not make stone images of him and burn incense or light candles in front of them.

His great grand father named Jotpal won the Malwa area from muslims and became its king. As Pipa's father died young, so Pipa became king. Because of youthfulness and customs he had 12 to 16 queens. Though he was very rich and had a great personality, he was also a spiritual and Godly person. He was a devotee of the Goddess Bhavani whose idol was enshrined in a temple within the premises of his palace. It is said that the

Goddess once told him in a dream to visit Kashi (Varanasi) and receive initiation from Bhagat Ramanand.

Did Pipa and Nanak meet?

Some people claim that Pipa met Nanak during journeys but this point is not proven. It is also said that Bhagat Pipa once met Guru Nanak in the town of Toda. This discovery is said to have been found through the teachings of Anant Das (who was the grandson of Bhagat Pipa), found by Principal Harbhajan Singh of Chandigarh. Anant Das wrote that the tola of the sadhus from Punjab (Guru Nanak) was going from Pushkar to Kashi and stayed at Toda town. However, the fact has not been proven.

It is believed that Pipa lived before Nanak's time and was here on earth at same time as Kabir, Ramanand, Sain etc were.

Bhagat Pipa in Dwarka Pipa finally decided to give up his throne and retire to a life of seclusion and meditation. He went to Dwarka (Gujarat) where Lord Krishna, after the Mahabharata war, had spent the last years of his life. All the twelve wives of Pipa insisted on accompanying him, but he took along only one, named Sita, who was of a pious temperament. He selected a cave for his residence from where he walked daily through a tunnel to the temple of Krishna on the sea coast. The temple is still a popular place of pilgrimage and a fair is held there annually in Pipa's memory. After what he thought was a personal encounter with the Lord, he gave up idol-worship.

He and his companion-wife started living in a jungle. After a period of penance, he set out roaming about the country to serve the common people. He, along with his wife, sang hymns and prayers of his own composition and collected money to be distributed among the poor. He fed the beggars and treated them as God's chosen ones.

Once an idol-worshipper (saguna bhakta) Pipa became a worshipper of the Formless One (nirguna devotee).

As he says in his hymn in the Guru Granth Sahib, the body itself is the Supreme Being's temple (kaiau deval). One need not make stone images of Him and burn incense or light candles in

front of them. Pipa composed many hymns in praise of the Lord and sang them along with his wife for seeking alms. The money he received was put to the service of the poor.

Merging with God

The traditional genealogy of Gagron suggests his death as early as 1400. His son, Maharaja Dwarka Nath, was successor of Gagron. His grandson Maharaja Achal Das ruled Gagron from 1410 AD and was killed by hereditary Muslim enemies in 1448 and captured Gagron.

Two collections of Pipa's sayings are known to exist, namely Shñ Pipa ji Bani and Sarab Gutaka, both in manuscript form. Pipa Math, a monastery in Dwārkā, honours his memory. Life Study through his Bani

A Gurmukh can easily understand life of Bhagat Pipa's through his Bani, in which he himself tells his beliefs before encountering with Gurmat. Following facts are clear from his Bani:

1. Renouncer turned householder: This belief is confirmed from above story and from his Bani too. Before finding Gurmat, he was an ascetic, as written ਕਾਇਆ ਬਰਖੰਡ ਖੋਜਤੇ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ but after experiencing Gurmat he changed. He said ਜੇ ਬਰਹਮੰਡੇ ਸੋਈ ਪਿੰਡੇ ਜੇ ਖੋਜੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਵੈ ॥, which means what one finds in the world is actually present in one's inner body. It means after having encounter with Gurmat he came back to his home or preached Gurmat only thereafter.

2. Do not support pilgrimages: Peepa find that there is no use of going for pilgrimages as God is present in one's heart all the time and one should visit there and purify it with God's name, ਕਾਇਮਉ ਜੰਗਮ ਜਾਤੀ ॥

3. Was against ritualism: While worshipping, people use light essence etc. which Peepa says is of no use. It's better if one does aarti of one's own inner body with Gurmat.

Swami Ramanand Ji



**"I am a sacrifice to You, O my True Guru.
You have cut through all my confusion and doubt."**

Swami Ramanand Ji is considered a pioneer of the great Bhakti Movement in Northern India. He had also been regarded as the bridge between the Bhakti Movement of the South and North. Though a Brahmin by birth, he did not entertain any sense of pride because of his caste. The above scene depicts the Swami and Bhagat Pipa Ji who received divine enlightenment by the grace of Swami Ramanand Ji.

Swami Ramanand is rightly regarded as an eminent of the bhagati movement in northern India and as a distinguished leader of the Bhairagi Movement. He was a follower of Swami Ragavacharya of the Ramanuj Movement (1017-1137). In the later part of his life the Archarya commanded more respect than even his own Guru and came to be known as an exponent of Rama Bhagati.

Born in 1366, Ramanand was the son of Bhoor Karma and Sushila. He was mystically inclined from his early childhood. Acharya Ragavnand, showed him the path of Yog sadhna.

Ramanand also visited places of pilgrimage such as Kanshi, where as mark of respect, people built a memorial that stands there to this day. After his pilgrimage, Ramanand realised that God can be worshipped by everyone whereas his Guru Archarya Ragavnand, who comes from the Sadhu Varna Ashrama believe that not everyone is entitled to perform Puja Bhagati.

Hence he started preaching his gospel in Kanshi and imbued many devotees with the spirit of Bhagati. Kabir was the most renowned amongst his disciples. Ravi das, Sain, Dhanna and Pipa are believed to be his followers even though all of them were not his contemporaries.

Ramanand was a learned Pandit. Many of his books such as Sri Vaishnava, Matanbuj Bhaskar, Sri Ramarachan Padhti are still available. One of his hymns has been inserted in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib under Rag Basant.

Bhagat Ramanand was the Guru, or spiritual teacher, of Bhagat Kabir and a disciple of Raghavanada, a known preacher of the Ramanuja tradition started by Ramanuja, a Tamilian by birth & the founder of the Rama bhagati or devotion to Lord Rama. Ramanand was born in AD1366 under a tree. The followers of Ramanand hold this tree in as much reverence as they do his real mother, Sushil by name. He spent all the 101 years of his life at his birth-place Kashi, (allahbad-Prayag, a holy city of Hindus, according to researchers) devoting every moment to the remembrance of Divine Name. He provided a new tone & tenor to the Bhagati movement. He saw that the contemporary society was drifting towards a particular direction under the influence of Lord Krishna's life as it was enacted in every village and town. Therefore he made successful endeavours to divert this mass tendency of the people, towards Rama-worship. Ramanand was above caste consideration, and therefore he initiated to his idealogy, people even from the so-called low castes. He also started several new trends in Vaishnava bhagati, the most important of which is that everybody has the right to worship God. As a result of this altruistic gesture on his part, the stream of Rama-Name flowed even up to the cottages of the poorest of the poor and the lowliest of the low. Consequently, the spiritual life of those so-called low people got elevated. In the society, which was then bound in the shackles of the caste-

system, such utterances had revolutionary effects. As it was, Brahmins were the only community which had the birth right to perform various rituals & observances connected with religion. But the liberal attitude adopted on the part of Ramanand led the Vairagi (a renouncer) tradition to accept him as their prominent Acharya (Hindu religious teacher). In this way, a new sect among the Vairagis under the name of Ramadatt came into being. This sect stressed celibacy, physical prowess & intense devotion to God. Gradually, Ramanand drifted from Vaishnavism to the worship of One Formless Lord.

Ramanand had several disciples who guided mankind on the way to bhagati (worshipping). Bhagat Pipa was one of his prominent disciples. Pipa was a king who gave up his ego & came under the patronage to seek spiritual guidance. As a king, he served his subject to their utmost welfare. Bhagat Ramanand also wandered about in Pipa's kingdom for some time. On the basis of his first-hand knowledge, he testified that was as a good a saint as he was a ruler. In his regime, all subjects enjoyed peace, justice and material comforts irrespective of caste or class.



Ramanand has only one hymn included in SGGS ji under Basant measure. Outside the Sikh Scripture, two more compositions of Ramanand are extant. These works are said to be of high literary value. These are: Sri Vaisnav Matanbuj Bhaskar & Sri Ramacharan Padhati.

Shabad from Ramanand in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib
Where should I go?
My home is filled with bliss.
My consciousness does not go out wandering.
My mind has become crippled. || 1 || Pause ||
One day, a desire welled up in my mind.
I ground up sandalwood, along with several fragrant oils.
I went to God's place, and worshipped Him there.
That God showed me the Guru, within my own mind. || 1
||
Wherever I go, I find water and stones.
You are totally pervading and permeating in all.
I have searched through all the Vedas and the Puraanas.
I would go there, only if the Lord were not here. || 2 ||
I am a sacrifice to You, O my True Guru.
You have cut through all my confusion and doubt.
Raamanand's Lord and Master is the All-pervading Lord
God.
The Word of the Guru's Shabad eradicates the karma of
millions of past actions. || 3 || 1 ||
 (SGGS, 1195)

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built a memorial that stands there to this day. After his pilgrimage, Ramanand realised that God can be worshipped by everyone whereas his Guru Archarya Raghavnand, who came from the Sadhu Varna Ashrama believed that not everyone was entitled to perform Puja Bhagati.

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Consequently, the spiritual life of those so-called low people got elevated. In the society, which was then bound in the shackles of the caste-system, such utterances had revolutionary effects. As it was, Brahmins were the only community which had the birth right to perform various rituals & observances connected with religion. But the liberal attitude adopted on the part of Ramanand led the Vairagi (a renouncer) tradition to accept him as their prominent Acharya (Hindu religious teacher). In this way, a new sect among the Vairagis under the name of Ramadatt came into being. This sect stressed celibacy, physical prowess & intense devotion to God. Gradually, Ramanand drifted from Vaishnavism to the worship of One Formless Lord. Ramanand had several disciples who guided mankind on the way to bhagati (worshipping). Bhagat Pipa was one of his prominent disciples. Pipa was a king who gave up his ego & came under the patronage to seek spiritual guidance. As a king, he served his subject to their utmost welfare. Bhagat Ramanand also wandered about in Pipa's kingdom for some time. On the basis of his first-hand knowledge, he testified that was as a good a saint as he was a ruler. In his regime, all subjects enjoyed peace, justice and material comforts irrespective of caste or class.

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Another Article on Bhagat Ramanand Ji

Bhagat Ramanand, was a Vaishnava Bhagat. Ramananda for the most part of his life lived in the holy city of Varanasi, and was a pioneer of the Bhakti movement, as well as a social reformer in Northern India. He was known for communicating in vernacular hindi, and accepting disciples of all castes.

Bhagat Ramanand is generally considered to have been born around AD 1400; some say that he was born in 1366 CE. Although there is disagreement on the exact date and place of birth, due to the few texts regarding his early life. The birthplace has been suggested to be Triveni Sangam Allahabad, Prayaga. He was born to an upper-caste Brahmin family, and his parents were probably named Sushila and Punyasadan Sharma. He was born to a Kanya Kubaj Brahmin family.

Renouncing and Spiritual Journey

Bhagat Ramanand is considered a pioneer of the Bhakti movement in the Indian subcontinent. He is also regarded as the bridge between the Bhakti movement of the South and North. Bhagat Ramanand was spiritually inclined right from his childhood. Acharya Raghavanand who is also known as Dakshinayat Rishi (as he lived in Jagannath Puri which is always considered a southern city in hindu scriptures) included him in the Ramavat sect.

Raghavand was a great scholar of his time. He was follower of Vishishtadvaita Vedanata. Later on Acharya, whose background was Sadhu Varna Ashrama believed that not

everyone was entitled to perform prayers. This viewpoint was not supported by Ramanand. There was a dispute between Ramananada and Ragvanand about this subject and Ramanand left Raghvanand.

Ramananda spent most of his life in Kashi (Banaras / Varanasi), where, as a mark of respect, people built a memorial that stands there to this day.

When Ramananda was a child, he studied the Hindu scriptures and showed great interest in spiritual thoughts. He received his early education in Kasi. A renowned philosopher and the prophet of the new Vaishnava religion, known for his downplaying the role of caste, Ramananda was particularly known for worshipping Lord Rama and his wife Goddess Sita. [1] Ramanuja and Ramananda both believed that the human soul is distinct from the Supreme Spirit and retains its identity and separate consciousness.

Bhagat Ramanand started preaching gosphel in Kashi and imbued many devotees with the spirit of Bhagati. Kabir is the most renowned amongst his disciples. Ravidas, Sain, Dhanna and Pipa are also believed to be his followers even though all of them were not his contemporaries.

Brahmins were the only community which had the birth right to perform various rituals and observances connected with religion due to the fact that they were the only ones who studied them. But the liberal attitude adopted on the part of Ramanand led the Vairagi (a renouncer) tradition to accept him as their prominent Acharya (Hindu religious teacher). In this way, a new sect among the Vairagis under the name of Ramadatt came into being. This sect stressed celibacy, physical prowess and intense devotion to God.

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basis of his first-hand knowledge, he testified that was as a good a saint as he was a ruler. In his regime, all subjects enjoyed peace, justice and material comforts irrespective of caste or class.

Contributions

Ramananda was an influential social reformer of Northern India. Ramananda played an important role in reviving a religious sect that provided a spiritual pathway to people of all castes.

Revolution Against Casteism

Ramananda realised that God can be worshiped by everyone because Lord Rama himself has never stopped the people of any caste from reaching Him. Instead, the Ramayan is full of stories about Shabri, Kevat, etc. who all were lower castes, but Rama gave them equal respect, the way he respected Brahmins. Ramananda believed that in spiritual pursuit, the caste system of India is redundant. He believed that to truly devote yourself to Lord Rama, one must forget one's caste identity and social status. Ramananda is quoted as saying, "Let no one ask a man's caste or with whom he eats. If a man is devoted to Hari, he becomes Hari's own." Ramananda had disciples of all castes.

He took a very radical approach to teaching and preaching through the inclusion of the poor and the people of low castes. After Ramananda's death, the members of the Ramanandi sect led a social revolution in the Ganges basin by recruiting women and members of low castes into their sect. In addition, Saint Ramananda was the driving force of the popularization of the devotion of Lord Rama.

Contribution towards hindi

Ramanandi sect also played a significant role in the development of Hindi literature, because Ramananda generally spoke and wrote in Hindi. The study of modern hindi literature as it is taught in the colleges of India today, generally starts with the telling of devotional stories and poems written by people whom the Vaisnavite bards claim were spiritual descendants of

Ramananda. These men include the great saints Tulsi Das, Mira Bai, and Kabir.

Teachings

The institutional centrality of Ramananda has long been reflected in the 'guru parampara' that connects every Ramanandi through an unbroken succession of gurus with Ramanand himself and, eventually, Ramchandra.

Ramananda defined his own studies with his dedication and self-surrender to the Supreme Soul, 'Paramatma'. According to Saint Ramananda, Lord Rama was the Supreme Spirit and the human race was simply one large family, 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'. He was a skilled and impressive preacher, who drew large crowds wherever he traveled, yet most of Ramananda's poems and sayings were not preserved. The result is the lack of texts that modern scholars and historians can use to unearth the life of Ramananda.

Ramananda was a learned man. Many of the books which are supposed to have been written by him such as Sri Vaishnava, Matanbuj Bhaskar and Sri Ramarachan Padhti are still available. He is also said to have authored a commentary called AnandabhAshya. In Sri Vaishnava, Matanbuj Bhaskar, Vaishnav Ramananda gave his profound philosophy and declared everyone has right to take refuge of Rama, a person can take refuge of Shri Rama in any mood (either Shanta, or Dasya, or Sakhya, or Vatsalya or Kanta Bhava). He further writes relation between Param-Brahman Rama and individual soul (Jiva) is like that of two friends, or father (Ram) and son (Jiva), or Husband (Ram) and wife (Jiva), or master and servant, etc.

Vaishnavism and Ramanand Ji

After leaving Acharya, Ramanand Ji contributed to Vaishvanism by reviving Bairagi Matt.

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Disciples of Ramananda

Ramananda's disciples include:

Bhavananda

Dhanna Bhagat

Kabir

Nabha

Naraharyanda

Pipa Bairagi (Of Rajputana Clan)

Ravidas

Sain

Sukhanada

Ranka

Tulsidas (not the author of Ramcharitmanas)

Anantananda

Vitthal Kulkarni (Father of Dnyaneshwar, who is founder of the Varkari movement)(Sant Dnyaneshwar, son of Vitthal Kulkarni as per wikipedia lived in the 2nd half of 13th century whereas Ramanandji lived in the 14th century, so it is unlikely that Vitthal Kulkarni could have been his disciple.)

Kabirpanthi claims that In Real Kabirdas is Disciple of Ramanad ji, But the original Knowledge(About God) to ramanad is Given by Kabir.

By legend, Kabir originally hesitated to ask Ramanand to adopt him as his disciple due to the rigid caste system of the Hindus. Ramananda stayed in his cottage all day and only left it at about 3 o'clock in the morning to go down to the Ganges River to have a bath and perform his rites. Kabir had a knowledge of Ramananda's daily habits and so he waited one night for Ramananda by lying on the steps of Panchganga ghat. When Ramananda accidentally stepped on Kabir on his way to bathe,

he uttered "Utho! Ram ko Ram bolo!" (Rise up! Say Ram to Ram!). This became, for Kabir, the sacred mantra. Ramananda later gave him formal Diksha. Kabir grew among the ranks of important religious reformers in India.

Bhagat Ravidas Ji

Let us now pay a visit to town with new discipline. On Aang345 of SGGs ji, this town called Begumpura, is described as being beautiful;

ਬੇਗਮ ਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ)

Begumpura, 'the city without sorrow', is the name of the town.

ਦੂਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no suffering or anxiety there.

ਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

There are no troubles or taxes on commodities there.

ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no fear, blemish or downfall there. ||1||

ਅਬ ਮੋਹਿ ਖੂਬ ਵਤਨ ਗਹ ਪਾਈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

Now, I have found this most excellent city.

ਉਹਾਂ ਖੇਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is lasting peace and safety there, O Siblings of Destiny. ||1||Pause||

ਕਾਇਮੁ ਦਾਇਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

God's Kingdom is steady, stable and eternal.

ਦੋਮ ਨ ਸੋਮ ਏਕ ਸੋ ਆਹੀ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no second or third status; all are equal there.

ਆਬਾਦਾਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਸਹੂਰ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

That city is populous and eternally famous.

ਉਹਾਂ ਗਨੀ ਬਸਹਿ ਮਾਮੂਰ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

Those who live there are wealthy and contented. ||2||

ਤਿਉ ਤਿਉ ਸੈਲ ਕਰਹਿ ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

They stroll about freely, just as they please.

ਮਹਰਮ ਮਹਲ ਨ ਕੋ ਅਟਕਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ)

They know the Mansion of the Lord's Presence, and no one blocks their way.

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਖਲਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ)

Says Ravi Das, the emancipated shoe-maker:

ਜੋ ਹਮ ਸਹਰੀ ਸੁ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩॥੨॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ)

whoever is a citizen there, is a friend of mine. ||3||2||

This unique concept was the vision of Bhagat Ravidas, an important personality in the Bhagati movement in the 14th

century. Behind the vision of the city, as described above by him, are reflected all those horrifying and hateful forces which he had to face all his life, because of his birth in a so-called low caste. Ravidas was born in 1378AD to a cobbler couple (father Ramu, also called by many: Mann Das and mother Dhurbinia, alias Karama Devi) of Kahi, an important religious centre of Hindusim. Because of his birth in this caste considered low in the Hindu caste hierarchy, even this loving devotee of God was looked down upon. It will not be an exaggeration to say that caste barriers do not limit persons with high spiritual status. The thoughts & deeds of such devotees of God are unique. Their birth into this world is always in keeping with some superior design of the Divine. Whatever such people do is never inspired by a selfish motive. Such seems to have been the object of Bhagat Ravidas' birth also. He came into this world with a message of love for mankind, and he remained ever active to create among humans the feelings of equality and equity. He travelled quite widely to propagate these ideals among the masses. Along with other metaphysical tenets preached by him, he also gave mankind the message that it should kindle the lamp of knowledge and then plunge deep into the Divine love.

ਨਾਮ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਲਗਾਈ ਭਇਓ ਉਜਿਆਰੇ ਭਵਨ ਸਗਲਾਰੇ ॥੨॥ (੬੯੪-੧੬, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ)

Your Name is the light applied to this lamp, which enlightens and illuminates the entire world. ||2||

ਕਹੈ ਰਵਿਦਾਸੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਆਰਤੀ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਭੋਗ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ॥੪॥੩॥ (੬੯੪-੧੯)

Says Ravi Das, Your Name is my Aartee, my lamp-lit worship-service. The True Name, Sat Naam, is the food which I offer to You. ||4||3||

Once, a Brahmin was about to set out for Haridwar to have a ritual purificatory bath there. Bhagat Ravidas approached him with a two-pese (small Indian coin) that he had saved from his righteous earnings and requested him that he may offer this coin to mother Ganges only when she stretches out her hands seeking the offer. The Brahmin took it as a joke, but still he accepted the coin and left for Haridwar. It is said that as the Brahmin was having his bath, mother Ganges stretched out her hands and sought the offering her devotee Ravidas had sent. The Brahmin was wonderstruck, but still he put the coin on her hands. Mother Ganges was immensely pleased on receiving an offering from her devotee, and in return she gave for Ravidas, a golden bangle to the Brahmin who was tempted by this beautiful

and costly object. On his return he did not give the bangle to Ravidas, but instead gave it to a King and earned considerable wealth in lieu of it. The King's wife was pleased beyond words on receiving such a wonderful gift. Still she requested her husband that he should order the Brahmin to bring another similar bangle for her so that she has at least a pair of such bangles. The King ordered the Brahmin to bring one more bangle of the same quality and beauty.

The Brahmin now found himself in a tight corner. When he could not think of a way out, he at last went to Ravidas. He admitted his deceit and narrated the whole incident to him. He further told Ravidas ji that his life could only be spared if Ravidas helps him get another bangle for the queen. He fell prostrate before Ravidas and made a humble request with folded hands that he should be kind enough to help him out and thus save his life. Ravidas asked him to have patience, and then asked him to look into the bowl which was full of water used to dip the leather in to make it soft, in the shoe-making process. The Brahmin looked intently into the bowl. He saw the Ganges flowing therein and many, many such bangles also lying on the bottom. The Brahmin was puzzled. Ravidas told him to put his hands into the bowl and take out a bangle to fulfil his need. Thus, he came to know the spiritual position of Ravidas. Those were the intellectually blind and ego-ridden who looked upon him as a low-caste man. Guru Ram Das has also said about the spiritual greatness of Ravidas ji that people from all four varnas (castes) fell on his feet because of his spiritual attainment. An extract from this hymn is given below:

ਰਵਿਦਾਸੁ ਚਮਾਰੁ ਉਸਤਿਤ ਕਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਨਿਮਖ ਇਕ ਗਾਇ ॥ (੨੩੩-੯, ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਹਲਾ ੪)

Ravi Das, the leather-worker, praised the Lord, and sang the Kirtan of His Praises each and every instant.

ਪਤਿਤ ਜਾਤਿ ਉਤਮੁ ਭਇਆ ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਪਏ ਪਗਿ ਆਇ ॥੨॥ (੨੩੩-੯, ਸੂਹੀ, ਮਹਲਾ ੪)

Although he was of low social status, he was exalted and elevated, and people of all four castes came and bowed at his feet. ||2||

Writing about him, Kabir ji has also said that Ravidas was 'the most saintly among saints'

In so far as the humility of Bhagat Ravidas is concerned, everybody who came in contact with him was impressed by this virtue of his. He was so softhearted that he would change the whole environment with his polite and respectful words even for an opponent. Mira Bai, one of his disciples, says of him:

'He who is fortunate enough to meet the Guru like Ravidas will never distract his attention from Divine Name'. It was the result of his devotion and love that he left deep impression on everybody and came to be called a great personage.

There is another anecdote related about the detached nature, temperance and contentment of Ravidas, A brief account of the event is given here. Once a gentleman left Paras (invaluable touch stone) with Ravidas so that he could make use of it to get rid of his poverty. The gentleman, after sometime again called on his way back. He was surprised to find no material change in Ravidas' economic position. With the intention of reminding Ravidas that he had Paras with him, the gentleman asked him to return the invaluable Paras to him. Ravidas calmly replied that he could pick it up where he had left it. He felt rather non-plussed that Ravidas didn't make any endeavours to improve his economic position despite the fact that he was well aware of the value and characteristics of Paras.

Bhagat Ravidas knew what was going on in the visitor's mind and with a view to satisfy his curiosity he told him that it behoves man to engage himself in honest labour to make both ends meet. However, if he wants to gather wealth, he should gather the wealth of Divine Name instead of Gold and Silver. It is the wealth of Name, which would help a person in this world and the afterlife too. In his quest for material comforts, man goes astray from the true aim of life, i.e. devotion to the Lord. Ravidas advises him that without Hari's Name, all else is falsehood. Therefore, one should discard ego and devote themselves to God whereby alone they can make their life beyond death secure and pleasant. All other deeds except remembrance of His Name are futile of course, it is therefore essential for a person to do some work to earn for their livelihood.

If we look at the life-pattern of animals, we shall find that the animals give us nectar-like-milk even if they are fed on very poor fodder. Thus, they are altruistic towards us and this service helps them in the future. On the other hand, God has blessed man with consciousness. He is conscious of everything, and has the resources to obtain and taste viands of 36 kinds. He eats and drinks so well, but if he still does not cultivate the Divine love in his heart, this implies that he is not the acme, but the lowest among lowly animals. The spirit of greatness within him seems to have vanished. Therefore, remembrance of the Lord along with daily routine, is a must for everyone. Bhagat Ravidas ji remembered Him in a variety of ways, thereby showing his deep devotion, immense love and complete satisfaction in Him.

A total of 40 hymns; set to 16 different musical measures, of Ravidas are included in SGGS ji. These hymns address themselves to the theme of love for the Divine, mankind's intimate and essential relationship with Him, and deep devotion to Him. According to Bhagat Ravidas, realisation of the Divine is possible only through loving devotion and all else is mere pretension or futile exercise. A few excerpts, as given below, from Ravidas' hymns are an ample guide for man on his way to spiritual progression:

ਤੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਤੋਹੀ ਅੰਤਰੁ ਕੈਸਾ ॥ (੯੩-੧੫, ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗੁ)

You are me, and I am You-what is the difference between us?

ਕਨਕ ਕਟਿਕ ਜਲ ਤਰੰਗ ਜੈਸਾ ॥੧॥ (੯੩-੧੬, ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗੁ)

We are like gold and the bracelet, or water and the waves.

||1||

ਜਉ ਪੈ ਹਮ ਨ ਪਾਪ ਕਰੰਤਾ ਅਹੇ ਅਨੰਤਾ ॥ (੯੩-੧੬, ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗੁ)

If I did not commit any sins, O Infinite Lord,

ਪਤਿਤ ਪਾਵਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਕੈਸੇ ਹੁੰਤਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੯੩-੧੬, ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗੁ)

how would You have acquired the name, 'Redeemer of sinners'? ||1||Pause||

ਜਬ ਹਮ ਹੋਤੇ ਤਬ ਤੂ ਨਾਹੀ ਅਬ ਤੂਹੀ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ (੬੫੭-੧੭, ਸੋਰਠਿ)

When I am in my ego, then You are not with me. Now that You are with me, there is no egotism within me.

ਸਾਚੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਹਮ ਤੁਮ ਸਿਉ ਜੋਰੀ ॥ (੬੫੯-੧, ਸੋਰਠਿ)

I am joined in true love with You, Lord.

ਤੁਮ ਸਿਉ ਜੋਰਿ ਅਵਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੋਰੀ ॥੩॥ (੬੫੯-੧, ਸੋਰਠਿ)

I am joined with You, and I have broken with all others.

||3||

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਝੂਠੇ ਸਗਲ ਪਾਸਾਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੬੯੪-੧੪, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ)

Without the Name of the Lord, all ostentatious displays are useless. ||1||Pause||

ਐਸੀ ਲਾਲ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਕਰੈ ॥ (੧੧੦੬-੧੨, ਮਾਰੂ)

O Love, who else but You could do such a thing?

ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜੁ ਗੁਸਈਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਥੈ ਛਤ੍ਰੁ ਧਰੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੧੧੦੬-੧੨, ਮਾਰੂ)

O Patron of the poor, Lord of the World, You have put the canopy of Your Grace over my head. ||1||Pause||

ਜਾ ਕੀ ਛੋਤਿ ਜਗਤ ਕਉ ਲਾਗੈ ਤਾ ਪਰ ਤੁਹਖੀ ਢਰੈ ॥ (੧੧੦੬-੧੩, ਮਾਰੂ)

Only You can grant Mercy to that person whose touch pollutes the world.

ਨੀਚਹ ਉਚ ਕਰੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ਕਾਹੂ ਤੇ ਨ ਡਰੈ ॥੧॥ (੧੧੦੬-੧੩, ਮਾਰੂ)

You exalt and elevate the lowly, O my Lord of the Universe; You are not afraid of anyone. ||1||

Bhagat Ravidas paid no concern to caste, hierarchy, untouchability, etc. and instead considered each being a particle of the Divine and the difference between the two is like between gold and ornaments made of gold or water and the wave. Thus he advised all mankind to seek union with the Creator-Lord.

He lived to a ripe old age of 151 years, and died in 1529 AD at Chittor, in Rajasthan. An umbrella-like tomb in his memory still stands there. It was Ravidas' firm faith in the Lord that he was able to ultimately achieve oneness with the Lord. His teachings, as a pious message, still enjoy a place of eminence since they are an excellent guide for human beings to move ahead on the way to God-realisation.

Such works by Bhagat Ravidas ji include:

ਮੇਰੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪੋਚ ਸੋਚ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ॥ (੩੪੫-੯, ਗਉੜੀ)

The company I keep is wretched and low, and I am anxious day and night;

ਮੇਰਾ ਕਰਮੁ ਕੁਟਿਲਤਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਕੁਭਾਂਤੀ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੫-੯, ਗਉੜੀ)

my actions are crooked, and I am of lowly birth. ||1||

ਰਾਮ ਗੁਸਈਆ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਜੀਵਨਾ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੦, ਗਉੜੀ)

O Lord, Master of the earth, Life of the soul,

ਮੋਹਿ ਨ ਬਿਸਾਰਹੁ ਮੈ ਜਨੁ ਤੇਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੦, ਗਉੜੀ)

please do not forget me! I am Your humble servant.

||1||Pause||

ਮੇਰੀ ਹਰਹੁ ਬਿਪਤਿ ਜਨ ਕਰਹੁ ਸੁਭਾਈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ)

Take away my pains, and bless Your humble servant with Your Sublime Love.

ਚਰਣ ਨ ਛਾਡਉ ਸਰੀਰ ਕਲ ਜਾਈ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੫-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ)

I shall not leave Your Feet, even though my body may perish. ||2||

ਕਹੁ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਪਰਉ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਾਭਾ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ)

Says Ravi Daas, I seek the protection of Your Sanctuary; ਬੇਗਿ ਮਿਲਹੁ ਜਨ ਕਰਿ ਨ ਬਿਲਾਂਬਾ ॥੩॥੧॥ (੩੪੫-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ)

please, meet Your humble servant - do not delay! ||3||1|| ਬੇਗਮ ਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ)

Baygumpura, 'the city without sorrow', is the name of the town.

ਦੂਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no suffering or anxiety there.

ਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

There are no troubles or taxes on commodities there.

ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no fear, blemish or downfall there. ||1||

ਅਬ ਮੋਹਿ ਖੂਬ ਵਤਨ ਗਹ ਪਾਈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ)

Now, I have found this most excellent city.

ਉਹਾਂ ਖੇਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is lasting peace and safety there, O Siblings of Destiny. ||1||Pause||

ਕਾਇਮੁ ਦਾਇਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

God's Kingdom is steady, stable and eternal.

ਦੋਮ ਨ ਸੇਮ ਏਕ ਸੋ ਆਹੀ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ)

There is no second or third status; all are equal there.

ਆਬਾਦਾਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਸਹੂਰ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

That city is populous and eternally famous.

ਉਹਾਂ ਗਨੀ ਬਸਹਿ ਮਾਮੂਰ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

Those who live there are wealthy and contented. ||2||

ਤਿਉ ਤਿਉ ਸੈਲ ਕਰਹਿ ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ)

They stroll about freely, just as they please.

ਮਹਰਮ ਮਹਲ ਨ ਕੋ ਅਟਕਾਵੈ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ,)

They know the Mansion of the Lord's Presence, and no one blocks their way.

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਖਲਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ)

Says Ravi Daas, the emancipated shoe-maker:

ਜੋ ਹਮ ਸਹਰੀ ਸੁ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩॥੨॥ (੩੪੫-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ)

whoever is a citizen there, is a friend of mine. ||3||2||

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੭)

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੭)

Gauree Bairaagan, Ravi Daas Jee:

ਘਟ ਅਵਘਟ ਡੂਗਰ ਘਣਾ ਇਕੁ ਨਿਰਗੁਣੁ ਬੈਲੁ ਹਮਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੭, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

The path to God is very treacherous and mountainous, and all I have is this worthless ox.

ਰਮਈਏ ਸਿਉ ਇਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੂੰਜੀ ਰਾਖੁ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੫-੧੮, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

I offer this one prayer to the Lord, to preserve my capital.

||1||

ਕੋ ਬਨਜਾਰੋ ਰਾਮ ਕੋ ਮੇਰਾ ਟਾਂਡਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਜਾਇ ਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੫-੧੮, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

Is there any merchant of the Lord to join me? My cargo is loaded, and now I am leaving. ||1||Pause||

ਹਉ ਬਨਜਾਰੋ ਰਾਮ ਕੋ ਸਹਜ ਕਰਉ ਬੁਧਾਰੁ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

I am the merchant of the Lord; I deal in spiritual wisdom.

ਮੈ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਧਨੁ ਲਾਇਆ ਬਿਖੁ ਲਾਦੀ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੬-੧, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

I have loaded the Wealth of the Lord's Name; the world has loaded poison. ||2||

ਉਰਵਾਰ ਪਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਾਨੀਆ ਲਿਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਆਲ ਪਤਾਲੁ ॥ (੩੪੬-੨, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

O you who know this world and the world beyond: write whatever nonsense you please about me.

ਮੋਹਿ ਜਮ ਡੰਡੁ ਨ ਲਾਗਈ ਤਜੀਲੇ ਸਰਬ ਜੰਜਾਲ ॥੩॥ (੩੪੬-੨, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

The club of the Messenger of Death shall not strike me, since I have cast off all entanglements. ||3||

ਜੈਸਾ ਰੰਗੁ ਕਸੁੰਭ ਕਾ ਤੈਸਾ ਇਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ (੩੪੬-੩, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

Love of this world is like the pale, temporary color of the safflower.

ਮੇਰੇ ਰਮਈਏ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਜੀਠ ਕਾ ਕਹੁ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰ ॥੪॥੧॥ (੩੪੬-੩, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

The color of my Lord's Love, however, is permanent, like the dye of the madder plant. So says Ravi Daas, the tanner. ||4||1||

ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਜੀਉ (੩੪੬-੪)

Gauree Poorbee, Ravi Daas Jee:

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (੩੪੬-੪)

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਕੂਪੁ ਭਰਿਓ ਜੈਸੇ ਦਾਦਿਰਾ ਕਛੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਬਿਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਬੂਝ ॥ (੩੪੬-੬, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

The frog in the deep well knows nothing of its own country or other lands;

ਐਸੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਬਿਮੋਹਿਆ ਕਛੁ ਆਰਾ ਪਾਰੁ ਨ ਸੂਝ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੬-੬, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)
just so, my mind, infatuated with corruption, understands nothing about this world or the next. ||1||

ਸਗਲ ਭਵਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਇਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਛਿਨੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਦਿਖਾਇ ਜੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੬-੭, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

O Lord of all worlds: reveal to me, even for an instant, the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. ||1||Pause||

ਮਲਿਨ ਭਈ ਮਤਿ ਮਾਧਵਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਲਖੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ (੩੪੬-੭, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

My intellect is polluted; I cannot understand Your state, O Lord.

ਕਰਹੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਈ ਮੈ ਸੁਮਤਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਸਮਝਾਇ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੬-੮, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

Take pity on me, dispel my doubts, and teach me true wisdom. ||2||

ਜੋਗੀਸਰ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਤੁਅ ਗੁਣ ਕਥਨੁ ਅਪਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੬-੮, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

Even the great Yogis cannot describe Your Glorious Virtues; they are beyond words.

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਕੈ ਕਾਰਣੈ ਕਹੁ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰ ॥੩॥੧॥ (੩੪੬-੯, ਗਉੜੀ ਪੂਰਬੀ)

I am dedicated to Your loving devotional worship, says Ravi Daas the tanner. ||3||1||

ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ (੩੪੬-੧੦)

Gauree Bairaagan:

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੦)

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਸਤੁ ਤੇਤਾ ਜਗੀ ਦੁਆਪਰਿ ਪੂਜਾਰਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

In the Golden Age of Sat Yuga, was Truth; in the Silver Age of Trayta Yuga, charitable feasts; in the Brass Age of Dwaapar Yuga, there was worship.

ਤੀਨੋ ਜੁਗ ਤੀਨੋ ਦਿਤੇ ਕਲਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮ ਅਧਾਰ ॥੧॥ (੩੪੬-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

In those three ages, people held to these three ways. But in the Iron Age of Kali Yuga, the Name of the Lord is your only Support. ||1||

ਪਾਰੁ ਕੈਸੇ ਪਾਇਬੋ ਰੇ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੧, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

How can I swim across?

ਮੇਂ ਸਉ ਕੋਊ ਨ ਕਹੈ ਸਮਝਾਇ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

No one has explained to me,
ਜਾ ਤੇ ਆਵਾ ਗਵਨੁ ਬਿਲਾਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
so that I might understand how I can escape
reincarnation. ||1||Pause||
ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਰੂਪੀਐ ਕਰਤਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਸਭ ਲੋਇ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੨, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
So many forms of religion have been described; the whole
world is practicing them.
ਕਵਨ ਕਰਮ ਤੇ ਛੂਟੀਐ ਜਿਹ ਸਾਧੇ ਸਭ ਸਿਧਿ ਹੋਇ ॥੨॥ (੩੪੬-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
What actions will bring emancipation, and total
perfection? ||2||
ਕਰਮ ਅਕਰਮ ਬਿਚਾਰੀਐ ਸੰਕਾ ਸੁਨਿ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੩, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
One may distinguish between good and evil actions, and
listen to the Vedas and the Puraanas,
ਸੰਸਾ ਸਦ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਬਸੈ ਕਉਨੁ ਹਿਰੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥੩॥ (੩੪੬-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
but doubt still persists. Skepticism continually dwells in
the heart, so who can eradicate egotistical pride? ||3||
ਬਾਹਰੁ ਉਦਕਿ ਪਖਾਰੀਐ ਘਟ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਬਿਬਿਧਿ ਬਿਕਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੪, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
Outwardly, he washes with water, but deep within, his
heart is tarnished by all sorts of vices.
ਸੁਧ ਕਵਨ ਪਰ ਹੋਇਬੋ ਸੁਚ ਕੁੰਚਰ ਬਿਧਿ ਬਿਉਹਾਰ ॥੪॥ (੩੪੬-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
So how can he become pure? His method of purification is
like that of an elephant, covering himself with dust right
after his bath! ||4||
ਰਵਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸ ਰਜਨੀ ਜਥਾ ਗਤਿ ਜਾਨਤ ਸਭ ਸੰਸਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੫, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
With the rising of the sun, the night is brought to its end;
the whole world knows this.
ਪਾਰਸ ਮਾਨੋ ਤਾਬੋ ਛੂਟੇ ਕਨਕ ਹੋਤ ਨਹੀ ਬਾਰ ॥੫॥ (੩੪੬-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
It is believed that with the touch of the Philosopher's
Stone, copper is immediately transformed into gold. ||5||
ਪਰਮ ਪਰਸ ਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਪੂਰਬ ਲਿਖਤ ਲਿਲਾਟ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੬, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
When one meets the Supreme Philosopher's Stone, the
Guru, if such pre-ordained destiny is written on one's
forehead,
ਉਨਮਨ ਮਨ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮਿਲੇ ਛੁਟਕਤ ਬਜਰ ਕਪਾਟ ॥੬॥ (੩੪੬-੧੭, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
then the soul blends with the Supreme Soul, and the
stubborn doors are opened wide. ||6||
ਭਗਤਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰੀ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟਿ ਬਿਕਾਰ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੭, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)
Through the way of devotion, the intellect is imbued with
Truth; doubts, entanglements and vices are cut away.
ਸੋਈ ਬਸਿ ਰਸਿ ਮਨ ਮਿਲੇ ਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਏਕ ਬਿਚਾਰ ॥੭॥ (੩੪੬-੧੮, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

The mind is restrained, and one attains joy, contemplating the One Lord, who is both with and without qualities. ||7||
ਅਨਿਕ ਜਤਨ ਨਿਗ੍ਰਹ ਕੀਏ ਟਾਰੀ ਨ ਟਰੈ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਫਾਸ ॥ (੩੪੬-੧੯, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

I have tried many methods, but by turning it away, the noose of doubt is not turned away.

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਉਪਜੈ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਉਦਾਸ ॥੮॥੧॥ (੩੪੬-੧੯, ਗਉੜੀ ਬੈਰਾਗਣਿ)

Love and devotion have not welled up within me, and so Ravi Daas is sad and depressed. ||8||1|

Another Article on Bhagat Ravidass Ji

Bhagat Ravi Das (Gurmukhi: ਭਗਤ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ), was a poet, devotee and Gurmukh was born on Maghshudhi 14 Pooranmashi in Smt.1456, i.e., 30 January 1399 in Kashi. He was a monotheist and was knower of Gurmat. He admired Kabir and Namdev who were probably before Ravi Das. In Guru Granth Sahib, many devotional hymns of Bhagat Ravi Das are present. He was devotee of God, and his hymns are placed under Bani Bhagatan ki. Ravi Dasi's treat Bhagat Ravi Das as their Guru and they have separate Sect from mainstream hindus muslims and Sikhs. He was Tanner by profession.

Sikhs follow the teaching of Ravi Das, as in Gurmat, Kabir, Nanak, Ravi Das, Bhatts all are same and all are treated as Guru and Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib which include the teaching of many who had similar thoughts about God.

Early Life

His parents were in the leather trade, and were very well off. He was barely five days old when Bhagat Ramanand visited his house and blessed the child. Ravi Das was born to Raghu and Ghurbinia, who lived near the city of Varanasi.

When Ravi Das reached the age of discretion his father inspired him to join the family business. But Ravi Das was imbued with celestial and humane values. The money he received from his father for business, he spent in the welfare of the Saints and needy. His father was extremely perturbed and banished him from the house.

By this time Ravi Das was already married. Rather than resenting his father's actions he quietly left the house, started living in a make-shift hut with his wife, and set up a small wayside shop for mending shoes.

Devotion to the Lord

He did not abandon his love for the God and built a Temple of clay-walls and thatched roof. He installed an idol made out of hide in the Temple. His extreme devotion and universal love induced hundreds of people of all castes to join him in worship. This resulted in enviousness among the Brahmin priests who raised the matter in the Court of muslim Nawab of Kashi. The Nawab was a man of righteousness, and put the matter in a miraculous test.

Bhagat Ravi Das went into meditation and recited one of his hymns (Gauri Purbi P.346) and requested Almighty, "Take pity on me that my doubts may be dispelled." His prayer was answered, and his adoration acclaimed the triumph in the miraculous test. To express his gratitude he sang his hymn (Asa P.1606), "Thou art sandal and I am the poor castor-plant, dwelling close to thee. From a mean tree I have become sublime and Thine fragrance, exquisite fragrance, now, abides in me."



By the turn of fourteenth century, muslim rule was well established in India. When Bhagat Ramanand (1366-1467 AD) came to Northern India and made Kashi/Benares as his home, he noted that the muslim religion had made inroads into hinduism as a considerable number of hindus had been converted and had adopted Islam as their religion. Ramanand was an orthodox devotee of Shiva. He was, no doubt, impressed with the islamic belief in only One God and their talk of the equality of men; except for the Ruling Feudal Elite, the muslims of all classes mingled in every aspect of life--living, eating, religious ceremonies, marriages, paying no heed to casteism.

But he was very much distressed to observe that this was enhancing the conversion of hindus, particularly of the low-caste, into islam. He forsook the Shivaite austere practices endowed to him by his Bhagat, Ramanuj, and initiated the veneration of Universal Brotherhood. He accepted hindus of low-castes and even invited muslims to join him in worship, and become his followers. Among his most noted disciples were Kabir, a muslim weaver, Sain, a barber and Dhanna, a cultivator. Each of whom became a Bhagat (teacher) with his own devotees.

A rich man tried to allure him with the charm of wealth. It is said that he gave Ravi Das a philosopher's stone by the touch of which one could change any article into gold. In spite of Ravi Das refusing the gift the rich man left the stone hung under the ceiling. When he came back after one year the stone was still hanging there. The rich man announced to the world the indisputable godliness of Bhagat Ravi Das. This episode is considered to be an ecclesiastic test to judge Bhagat Ravi Das's endurance towards the worldly love. But some accounts associate this to the devious manipulation of the Brahmin priests to discredit Ravi Das, which, rather, ended in the triumph of Ravi Das.

Ravi Das's selfless devotion and casteless love for humanity spread far and wide. Maharani Jhally of Chitaur' was a noble woman of benevolence and piety. Her ardency brought her to Benares on a pilgrimage. In spite of the disapproval of the Brahmin priests, she straight-away went to the Temple of Ravi

Das who was in his ecclesiastic benediction at the time, reciting his hymns (Rag Sorath P.658-59).

The Maharani was captivated. Eventually she became his disciple and abandoned all her luxurious trappings. Her husband, the Maharana, had been turned against her, over her adopting a cobbler as her Bhagat. He was full of rage when she returned. He was pacified by listening to some of the hymns of Bhagat Ravi Das. However, he still wanted test Bhagat Ravi Das to invalidate the allegations of the Brahmins. Ravi Das (who remained a cobbler) was invited to Chitaur and requested to participate in an oblation.

The Brahmin priests, of course, refused to eat while a cobbler was seated in the same column of rows. Ravi Das voluntarily moved away. But miraculously every person distributing food appeared to look just like Bhagat Ravi Das to the Brahmins. (Another account states when the Brahmins sat down to eat, they saw Ravi Das seated between every two of them). They complained to the Maharana who perceived the hidden meaning of this marvel, and became an ardent devotee. Ravi Das remained in Chitaur for a long time. It is said that Mira Bai became his disciple as well during that period. As per some accounts he died at a ripe old age of nearly 120 years in Benares.

Guru Arjan decided to include the works of Ravi Das in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, there are 41 verses of Ravi Das, who the Sikhs refer to as Bhagat Ravi Das in the Sikh holy book, most of which are in very clear Hindi. His poetry is brimming with ardent love for God, Universe, Nature, Guru, and the Name. His sarcasm and pique shows his closeness with God.

Untouchability

He was the first to motivate his followers to challenge discrimination on the grounds of caste. Because of his charismatic deeds, he has become an important figure in the Whole World, his followers who call themselves Ravi Dasis refer to him as their Guru, a term still used across India today. He was the first to motivate his followers to make/call them untouchables who make/call them so. By his deeds he proved

that he was closer to God than those who were calling him ' low caste'. He was the first to attack the hindu caste system.

Devotional songs

His devotional songs and verses made a lasting impact in the Bhakti movement.

Translation: How to escape? I recite the name Ram.

Lord, if you are sandalwood, I am water;
with the fragrance in all parts of my body.

Lord, if you are a cloud, I am a peacock;
looking for you like a chakora for the moon.

Lord, if you are a lamp, I am the wick (bAti);
with the light burning day and night.

Lord, if you are a pearl, I am the thread;
together like gold and suhaga.

Lord, you are the master and I servant;
thus is the devotion of Ravidas.

Forty-one of his writings have been included in the Sikh Holy Book Guru Granth Sahib. There is also a larger body of hymns passed on independently of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Bhagat Ravi Das is venerated in northern India, and in the Indian state of Maharashtra, in particular by the Ravi Dasi religion. The movement gained an extra impetus in 1920 in Punjab, due to Sikh members formerly of the Chamar caste rebelling against the continued caste oppression aimed at them by other Sikhs who, despite the teachings of the 10 Sikh Gurus, still apparently believed themselves superior to their brothers. Apparently the idea of Pahul (Amrit first drank from a common iron bowl by 5 men of differing castes) as intended by Guru Gobind Singh to wipe out once and for all any trace of casteism was continuing to be a little hard for some sikhs to swallow.

In weakness, this group split from the Sikh community and joined the Ravi Dasi faith en-masse. Today, former Chamars from the Punjab are the largest visible ethnic group in the Ravi Dasi community. Punjabi Ravi Dasies have a number of Gurdwaras in the United Kingdom, especially in the Midlands. The Ravi Dasians however still consider themselves Sikhs.

Bhakati Movement

An important personality in the Bhakati movement in the 14th century. Ravi Das was born to father, Ramu, also called by many: Mann Das and mother, Dhurbinia, alias Karama Devi) of Kahi, an important religious centre of hindusim. Because of his birth, in this caste, were considered low in the hindu caste hierarchy, even this loving devotee of God was looked down upon.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that caste barriers do not limit persons with high spiritual status. The thoughts and deeds of such devotees of God are unique. Their birth into this world is always in keeping with some superior design of the Divine. Whatever such people do is never inspired by a selfish motive. Such seems to have been the object of Bhagat Ravi Das's birth also. He came into this world with a message of love for mankind, and he remained ever active to create among humans the feelings of equality and equity. He travelled quite widely to propogate these ideals among the masses. Along with other metaphysical tenets preached by him, he also gave mankind the message that it should kindle the lamp of knowledge and then plunge deep into the Divine love.

Although he was of low social status, he was exalted and elevated, and people of all four castes came and bowed at his feet. ||2||

Writing about him, Kabir ji has also said that Ravi Das was 'the most saintly among saints'.

In so far as the humility of Bhagat Ravi Das is concerned, everybody who came in contact with him was impressed by this virtue of his. He was so softhearted that he would change the whole environment with his polite and respectful words even for an opponent. Mira Bai, one of his disciples, says of him:

'He who is fortunate enough to meet the Guru like Ravi Das will never distract his attention from Divine Name'. It was the result of his devotion and love that he left deep impression on everybody and came to be called a great personage.

There is another anecdote related about the detached nature, temperance and contentment of Ravi Das, A brief account of the event is given here. Once a gentleman left Paras (invaluable touch stone) with Ravi Das so that he could make use of it to get rid of his poverty. The gentleman, after sometime again called on his way back. He was surprised to find no material change in Ravi Das' economic position. With the intention of reminding Ravi Das that he had Paras with him, the gentleman asked him to return the invaluable Paras to him. Ravi Das calmly replied that he could pick it up where he had left it. He felt rather non-plussed that Ravi Das didn't make Any endeavours to improve his economic position despite the fact that he was well aware of the value and characteristics of Paras.

Bhagat Ravi Das knew what was going on in the visitor's mind and with a view to satisfy his curiosity he told him that it behoves man to engage himself in honest labour to make both ends meet. However, if he wants to gather wealth, he should gather the wealth of Divine Name instead of Gold and Silver. It is the wealth of Name, which would help a person in this world and the afterlife too. In his quest for material comforts, man goes astray from the true aim of life, i.e. devotion to the Lord. Ravi Das advises him that without Hari's Name, all else is falsehood. Therefore, one should discard ego and devote themselves to God whereby alone they can make their life beyond death secure and pleasant. All other deedsexcept remembrance of His Name are futile of course, it is therefore essential for a person to do some work to earn for their livelihood.

If we look at the life-pattern of animals, we shall find that the animals give us nectar-like-milk even if they are fed on very poor fodder. Thus, they are altruistic towards us and this service helps them in the future. On the other hand, God has blessed man with consciousness. He is conscious of everything, and has the resources to obtain and taste viands of 36 kinds. He eats and drinks so well, but if he still does not cultivate the Divine love in his heart, this implies that he is not the acme, but the lowest among lowly animals. The spirit of greatness within him seems to have vanished. Therefore, remembrance of the Lord along with daily routine, is a must for everyone. Bhagat Ravi Das ji

remembered Him in a variety of ways, thereby showing his deep devotion, immense love and complete satisfaction in Him.

A total of 41 hymns; set to 16 different musical measures, of Ravi Das are included in SGGS ji. These hymns address themselves to the theme of love for the Divine, mankind's intimate and essential relationship with Him, and deep devotion to Him. According to Bhagat Ravi Das, realisation of the Divine is possible only through loving devotion and all else is mere pretension or futile exercise.

Gurbani

In the Guru Granth Sahib, the fourth [{Sikh Guru}], Guru Ram Das says how by remembering the Lord all the time, Bhagat Ravi Das came to be recognised and respected by all the people despite his low caste; the Guru tells us how people of all the four caste came and bowed to Bhagat Ravi Das. Ravi Das was honoured in the Court of the Lord.

ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਨਿਮਖ ਇਕ ਗਾਇ ॥ ਪਤਿਤ ਜਾਤਿ

ਉਤਮ ਭਇਆ ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਪਛ ਪਗਿ ਆਇ ॥੨॥

Raviḍas ḥamar uṣṭat̤ kare har kīrat̤ nimakh̤ ik gaᶜe. Paṭit̤
jaṭ̤ uṭam bhāᶜia ḥar varan paᶜe pag aᶜe. (2)

Ravi Daas, the leather-worker, praised the Lord, and sang the Kirtan of His Praises each and every instant. Although he was of low social status, he was exalted and elevated, and people of all four castes came and bowed at his feet. (2)
(SGGS p733)

In the shabad (hymn) below, Guru Nanak explains how the injustice of discrimination has no place in the Court of the Lord and how everyone has the same "light of God" within them and so should be treated equally without any bias. The holy Granth includes the Bani of Bhagats from different castes and religions.

ਜਾਣਹ ਜੇਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Jaṇhu joṭ̤ na pūḥḥahu jaṭ̤i agai jaṭ̤ na he. (1) rahaᶜo.

Recognize the Lord's Light within all, and do not consider social class or status;
there are no classes or castes in the world hereafter.

(1)(Pause)
(SGGS p349)

Bhagat Sadhana



SADHNAA, one of the fifteen saints and sūfis whose hymns are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sâhib, was a qasâi or butcher by profession who, by his piety and devotion, had gained spiritual eminence. He is believed to have been born at the village of Sehvân, in Sindh. He was cremated at Sirhind, in the Punjab, where even today a tomb stands in his memory. He is considered to be a contemporary of Nām Dev, another medieval saint. Sadhnaã lived by selling meat, though, as it is asserted, he never butchered the animals himself. His only sabda (hymn) in the measure Bilāval, in the Guru Granth Sâhib, indicates his belief that all evil deeds of a man could be washed away by devoted meditation on the Name— and so the deeds of a butcher:

What merit have you, Enlightener of the world, if our ill deeds are not effaced?

What avails it to enter the asylum of the lion, if a mere jackal will be allowed to devour one?

I am nothing, nor is anything mine Save my honour, O lord,! am your slave after all. (GG 858)

the ammonite stone, symbolising god Vishnu of the Hindu Trinity. His spiritual quest led him to renounce the household. He left Sehvân and roamed about the country preaching the love

of God. None of his holy songs have survived except the solitary hymn preserved in the Guru Granth Sāhib, which keeps his memory alive.

He honours His Servants Himself, He Blesses with both hands on his forehead. According to the Holy Word, every kind of being can get liberated provided he or she moulds his or her life in keeping with the ideals of the true preceptors. There are evidences in the Sakhis (religious stories) about the Gurus that Kauda, a Kapalika with devilish tendencies got transformed through Guru Nanak's company into a noble being. Similarly, there was a robber who used to rob people wearing the garb of a noble. He gave up his evil deeds and devoted himself to remembering Divine Name and service of mankind. Then, there was prostitute by the name of Ganka who succeeded in achieving the ultimate end of her life by remembering the Name (Lord). Sadhna, the butcher, was also one such person who used to kill daily many innocent animals for earning his livelihood. He belonged to village Sihwan, in the Hyderabad region, known as the cradle of ancient civilization. The exact date and year of his birth are not known. On the basis of whatever little information we have about him, we can say that Sadhna was a contemporary of Bhagat Namdev.

A hymn by Sadhna has been included in the Guru Granth Sahib; a fact which has immortalized him. It is said that Sadhna used Salgram (a stone idol symbolic of Siva) as a weight to weigh the meat he sold. One day an enlightened mendicant passed by, and he chided Sadhna for what he did. Sadhna repented and renounced his home and left for the forests. It is also said that on his way to the forests, a woman met him. She felt so charmed by Sadhna that she wanted to possess him. However, Sadhna remained indifferent to all her actions. She thought that perhaps the presence of her husband is the hindrance and Sadhna does not take the initiative because of his fear. So the woman took no time in murdering her husband, thereby clearing the way for Sadhna. However, while committing this crime, she failed to read correctly the mental state of Sadhna who was then on the point of acquiring mystical unity with the Lord. Therefore, whatever she did, she failed to charm Sadhna. At last when she found defeat staring in her face, she alleged that Sadhna had killed her

husband. Consequently, the poor Sadhna had his hands chopped off as a punishment for the crime he never committed. God has always protected his devotees and there are extant evidences to prove this contention : for example, He saved Prehlad, helped Namdev and saved the honour of Daropadi, similarly, Sadhna also prayed to God

Nothing am I, no pride is mine; nothing is mine,
On this occasion save the honour of Sadhna,
the Servant. SGGS-858

'The Lord listened to his prayer and accepted it. God through His graceful benevolence made his hands healthy once again. This gesture of grace by God flowed in Sadhna's mana (mind), the river of devotion to God.

Pandit Tara Singh instead of referring to this incident narrates another story. He says that Sadhna was a Muslim butcher. It was under the influence of a holy-man that he turned a Hindu. The qazis took affront and decreed that he be bricked alive in a building wall. At that moment, Sadhna felt helpless and offered a prayer to the Lord saying: O Omniscient Lord! Come to my aid in time, lest I should lose my life.

It seems this anecdote has been invented by his followers to match explanation with his hymn because it is universally accepted that a true devotee of God is ever happy in His will The only hymn of Sadhna wherein he prays God to save his honour and which finds inclusion in the Guru Granth Sahib (P 858) would read asunder;

For love of a king's daughter
a man disguised himself as Vishnu
Of this man, lust-seeker, self-seeker, You saved the
honour. (1)
Enlightener of the world! what merit is yours if our
retribution of deeds leave us not?
Why seek shelter with the tiger if a jackal
is to grip us? (1-Pause)
The Chatrik (cuckoo) for lack of a drop suffers.
If after its life is gone, even the ocean be found,
what good? (2)
Tired, without poise is my life-
How may I delay supplicating Thee?

If after drowning comes the boat,
who will then ride it?
Nothing am I, no pride is mine; nothing is mine.
On this occasion save the honour of Sadhna,
The servant. SGGS-858

If we paraphrase the above hymn, it would read as follows; what is the use of seeking shelter with a lion if a jackal threatens life even then? If the chatrik (A type of bird) dies for want of a single drop of water, what is the use of a full ocean after that? If a boat becomes available after one drowns, it is of no use. He continues to pray to God with the help of such instances: In the world-ocean many waves of evil arise and the helpless life fails to save the boat of life. Therefore, the Omniscient and benevolent God is requested that He should come and save him rather soon. Sadhna says that there is none except Him whom he could call his own.

The whole Shabad conveys this message that the prayer made by a devotee in the court of his Lord should be saturated with devotion and submission otherwise it is just a formality which one observes and we all know fully well that unless the prayer is done from the core of heart with utmost devotion and dedication, it is not accepted in the court of Lord God.

According to Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha, the mausoleum of Sadhna is near Sirhind which goes to suggest that Bhagat Sadhna travelling from Sindh reached Panjab during the fast days of his life. It was in Panjab that he breathed his last. As such, Sadhna got mingled in the soil of Panjab.

Another Article on Bhagat Sadhna Ji

Sadhna Bhagat(PA: मयन), also called Sadhna Qasai, was a North Indian Muslim poet, Saint Mystic and one of the devotees whose hymn was incorporated in Sri Adi Granth Sahib. Venerated in region of Punjab, among Sikhs, his devotional hymn and intellection within is widely quoted by most of preachers. Being butcher by profession, he was always annoyed by Religious Scholars, who keep such thought that a butcher could not attain spiritual enlightenment. His one hymn is present

in Adi Granth Sahib, in Raga Bilaval, in which he explained that believing in Karmic thought comes to an end after attaining spiritual wisdom (Gurmat) in addition to it he explained to remove an inflated feeling of pride within ourselves to know the Supreme. Sadhna travelling from Sindh reached Panjab during his last days of his life and preached around. At Sirhind, he breathed his last where a historic Mosque was built in his memory and preseved by Punjab Government. His followers are called Sadhna Panthis.

Sadhna is considered to be a contemporary of Bhagat Namdev[2][3]. Satgur Ravidas, who studied Satgur Sadhna hymn admired him in his own hymns, as given below:

ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਤਿਲੇਚਨੁ ਸਧਨਾ ਸੈਨੁ ਤਰੈ ॥

Naam Dayv, Kabeer, Trilochan, Sadhana and Sain crossed over.

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸੁ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਰੇ ਸੰਤਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਤੇ ਸਭੈ ਸਰੈ ॥੨॥੧॥

Says Ravi Daas, listen, O Saints, through the Dear Lord, all is accomplished. ||2||1||

Sikhs admire and follow the teachings of Sadhna. On Gurmat, Kabir, Nanak, Ravidas, Bhatta etc. all are same and all are treated as Gurus - "spiritual guides". Sikhs bow before Guru Granth Sahib which include the teaching of many who had the same thoughts and views about Almighty. Almighty himself spoke through his Bhagat's, revealing the holy Hymn.
Life

He was born in 1180 AD at village Sehwaan in Hyderabad Sindh province in a Muslim family. As ancestors were butchers by profession, he continued the family profession of slaughtering goats and selling meat.

Using Shaligram Shilas for weighing flesh

Sadhna got "Shaligram Shilas" and used them, as weights, in his profession i.e Butcher. Shila refers to a Vaishnava (hindu) aniconic representation of Vishnu, in the form of a spherical, usually black-coloured stone found in the sacred river Gandaki, The Shilas (Ammonite fossils) are worshipped as manifestations of Vishnu Himself, identifiable from other stones

by special markings, believed to resemble Vishnu's paraphernalia such as mace, conch, lotus and disc (chakra). Sadhna annoyed Vaishnav Sadhus and Pundits with this act.[4]. On one side, He was of lower profession and caste, on other side, he belittling their idol worship, by using idol in flesh of animals which is consider as sin by them. Those religious scholars always had a discourse with him, in which Sadhna always outcome.

It is recorded that one of Vaishnav Saint took Shaligram Stones with them. Sadhna had no issues with this and gave them calmly. Vaishnav saint continued worship Shaligram but got no internal pleasure and extreme wisdom, as he have seen in state, behavior and thoughts of Sadhna. With dashing hopes he returned Shaligram Stones, the Weights of Sadhna back. [7] Sadhna preached that "Shaligrams Stones" does not have god as these are lifeless stones, what spiritual life they can give to living being.

Change in Sadhna's life

It is recorded in few historical sources, that Once, in evening, Sadhna was washing up and cleaning his shop before closing, a customer came and asked for leg of mutton. Sadhna replied that he is just closing the shop and will give leg in morning. Customer urged that he required it badly and said not to cut whole goat and just cut the leg of it and give to him. Pressed by the customer, Sadhna went near the goat with a hatchet. As he approached the goat, he felt as if the goat was laughing. This shocked Sadhna.

Then the goat guided him that O' Sadhna, in your worldly greed, today you are going to open a new account of pain and misery. We have been going through many thousands of cycles of births and deaths, but never before has any of us cut a limb off while the other was still alive and he is beginning a new level of cruelty. At this point, the hatchet fell out of Sadhna's hand and he turned to the customer to tell him of his helplessness. But there was no one there. He did not find any customer there. A thought came to Sadhna's mind that It was the Lord Himself Who had come to reveal Himself to his devotee in the form of a customer. It is said that he left profession of butcher

Collision with Brahmin's Wife

As Sadhna was young and good looking with strong body, during his travels, his looks please a young married Brahmin lady. Sadhna said that he could not have relations with anyone out of his marriage, and he could not maintain such relations with a married lady. She thought sadhna might be scared of her husband. Without understanding Sadhna's thoughts, She killed her husband and told Sadhna. Sadhna was shocked with her attitude left the area after sermonizing her. The lady felt ashamed, she burnt herself on husband's funeral pyre, so that people continued thinking her to be Sati-Savitri.

Sadhna quoted, No one knows the ways of women, she kills her husband and became a sati, which then became popular as proverb and used by many poets and writers later on.

According to few authors, He came to Punjab after this incident.

Another story, narrates that the woman complained about Sadhna to the local administration. Sadhna was arrested and taken before a magistrate. The judge sentenced Bhagat Sadhna Ji to have his hands cut off. The punishment was duly carried out, and Bhagat Sadhna Ji was then discharged. He set out without a frown on his forehead notwithstanding his barbarous mutilation. Bhagat Sadhna Ji's devotions proved so successful that it is said, akaal purakh blessed him with new hands which sprouted from his body but this claim is vague.

Preaching Gospel

Sadhna has travelled through various parts of Indian subcontinent and possibility is that he also met and accompanied Bhagat Namdev. Bhagat Ravidas mentioned his name in his hymn with other Devotees, which means he was one of known Gurmukh of the times. The people who followed Sadhna are known as Sadhna Panthis. Sadhna Panthi is considered as Vaishnav Sect, but Sadhna does not hold views of Vaishnava Sect. Even every devotee whose hymns are incorporated in Adi Guru Granth Sahib are wrongly called Vaishnav Saints or followers of Vaishnavism, by some scholars. This is practically

wrong because of difference in thoughts in their hymns and Vaishnav tradition.

Sadhna preached Gurmat in regions of Punjab and Uttar Pardesh.

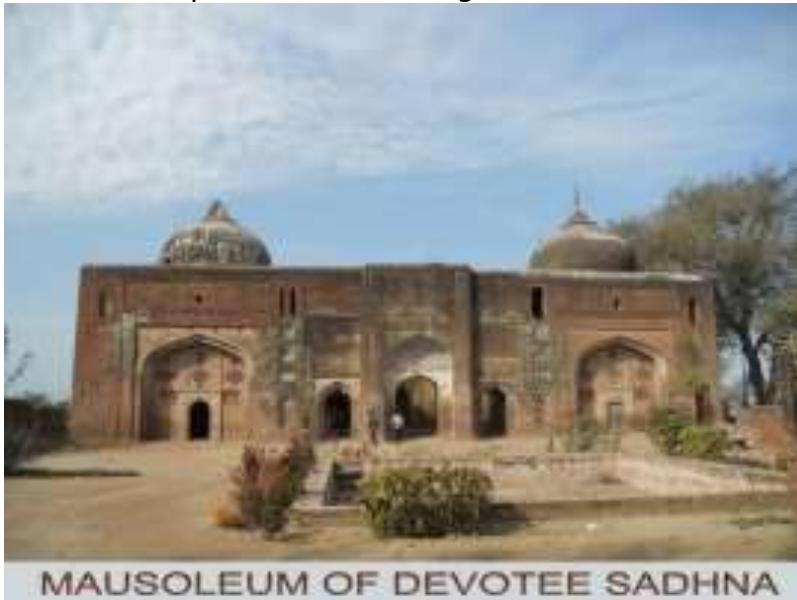
Writings

Bhagat Sadhna's bani can be found in the following ANG(page) of Guru Granth Sahib:

Bhagat Sadhna, Page 858

It is present after hymns of Bhagat Ravidas, under title Baani Sadhnae ki Raag Bilaval (ਬਾਣੀ ਸਧਨੇ ਕੀ, ਰਾਗ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ).

Concepts and Terminologies



Some key concepts to understand in hymn are:

1. ਨਰਿਪ ਕੰਨਿਆ (Nrip kanya): Daughter of King
2. ਇਕ ਭਇਆ ਭੇਖਧਾਰੀ (Ik Bhaya Bhekhdhari): "The One", took form
3. ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰਾ (Jagat Gura): Knower of Three worlds
4. ਕਰਮ ਨ ਨਾਸੈ (Karam Na Nase): Finishes the Thought of Karmas

5. ਝਕ ਬੂੰਦ (Ek Boond): The one Drop

6. ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛ ਹਉ ਨਹੀ (main naahin hau naahin): Neither me nor I

7. ਸਧਨਾ ਜਨ ਤੋਰਾ (sadhna jan tora): Sadhna - The knower of You

No Concept of Vishnu

The very first line is interpreted, not in context with gurmat:

ਨਰਿਖ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਨੈ ਇਕ ਭਇਆ ਭੇਖਧਾਰੀ ॥

For a king's daughter, a man disguised himself as Vishnu.

ਕਾਮਾਰਥੀ ਸਆਰਥੀ ਵਾ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਸਵਾਰੀ ॥੧॥

He did it for exploitation, and for selfish motives, but the Lord protected his honor. ||1||

In previous Interpretations, the interpreters moved out of subject of Adi Granth Sahib and blend Vaishnav mythology with Gurmat thought, especially Pundit Tara Singh Narotam (Fareedkoti Teeka), who is followed by others. There is a mature thought within Sikhs, that Words and concepts in Gurbani are defined well in gurbani itself and every hymn is interrelated.

While interpreting some typical words, concepts and depth, interpreters mix up perplexing mythology with the Gurmat thought, and bring Sikh thought back to thoughts of religious scholars. Those who were feeding on the souls, by giving them wrong knowledge about Spirituality. As he have only one hymn, situated in Adi Granth, and there is utmost chance of misinterpretations, when we use mythology or other thoughts while answering it so we take references from his contemporaries and writings of other Gurmukhs in same Granth, tackling the same subject.

The above line is related to soul, who take form for developing her intellect (Buddhi), who became self willed and selfish, when go along the way of Gurmat is protected by lord itself.

Bani

The beginning of this shabad is talking about the son of a poor man who heard that a king's daughter wanted to marry Vishnu. This young man then dressed up to look like the God

Vishnu. The princess on seeing this youngman fell in love with him.

As time went on, her father's kingdom was attacked by another king, who had an ever larger army and kingdom. When the princess saw the forces of the other king, approaching her father's kingdom she told everyone that she had Vishnu with her and that he would save all the people in her father's kingdom. The poor man's son who was dressed up as Vishnu, heard what the princess was saying. He got very worried and scared. What could he do, he wasn't the lord Vishnu and possessed no power to defend himself let alone a whole kingdom. As a consequence of this, the boy fell to the ground crying and begged the Lord Vishnu to save him and everyone in the kingdom.

The boy prayed with so much devotion and faith and love, that Vishnu listened to his prayers and helped the army of the girl's father defeat the much larger army of the invading king. Vishnu as a result saved all the people of the kingdom, including the boy who begged for his mercy.

This Shahbad is a conversation that Bhagat Sadhna Ji is having with Waheguru about his present situation.

In the first two lines of this shahbad, Bhagat Sadhna Ji is narrating the story above to Waheguru. He is asking Waheguru why he hasn't come to save him when he came and saved the poor man's son:

ਨਰਿਖ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਨੈ ਇਕ ਭਇਆ ਭੇਖਧਾਰੀ ॥

For a king's daughter, a man disguised himself as Vishnu.

ਕਾਮਾਰਥੀ ਸਆਰਥੀ ਵਾ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਸਵਾਰੀ ॥1॥

He did it for exploitation, and for selfish motives, but the Lord protected his honor. ||1||

Waheguru told Bhagat Sadhna Ji that it was written in Bhagat Ji's destiny that he would die this way.

Bhagat Sadhna Ji then repeated the next two lines. In these next two lines Bhagat Ji is asking Waheguru why he did not change his destiny so he wouldn't have to suffer such a

horrific death. The lion is meant to represent Akaal Purakh and the Jackal is a representation of the King who had ordered the execution of Bhagat Sadhna Ji in this way

ਤਵ ਗਨ ਕਹਾ ਜਗਤ ਗਰਾ ਜਉ ਕਰਮ ਨ ਨਾਸੈ ॥

What is Your value, O Guru of the world, if You will not erase the karma of my past actions?

ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨ ਕਤ ਜਾਈਝ ਜਉ ਜੰਬਕ ਗਰਾਸੈ ॥1॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Why seek safety from a lion, if one is to be eaten by a jackal? ||1||Pause||

Akaal Purakh hearing the pleas of Bhagat Sadhna Ji then told him, that after death he would be given salvation and a place in Sachkhand.

Bhagat Sadhna Ji then replied in the next two lines of the Shabad:

ਝਕ ਬੂੰਦ ਜਲ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਚਾਤਰਿਕ ਦਖ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

For the sake of a single rain-drop, the rainbird suffers in pain.

ਪਰਾਨ ਗਝ ਸਾਗਰ ਮਿਲੈ ਫਨਿ ਕਾਮਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥2॥

When its breath of life is gone, even an ocean is of no use to it. ||2||

On hearing this Waheguru told his beloved Bhagat Ji to smile and be in chardee kala as he was about to merge with his maker.

Bhagat Ji started to smile at this point and the executioners began to wonder if Bhagat Ji had gone mad. Bhagat Ji on seeing the executioners then loudly uttered the following two lines of the shabad:

ਪਰਾਨ ਜ ਥਾਕੇ ਬਿਰ ਨਹੀ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਿਰਮਾਵਉ ॥

Now, my life has grown weary, and I shall not last much longer; how can I be patient?

ਬੂਡਿ ਮੂਝ ਨਉਕਾ ਮਿਲੈ ਕਹ ਕਾਹਿ ਚਢਾਵਉ ॥3॥

If I drown and die, and then a boat comes along, tell me, how shall I climb aboard? ||3||

Bhagat Ji then uttered the last two lines of the Shabad just before he went back home:

ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛੁ ਹਉ ਨਹੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਆਹਿ ਨ ਮੇਰਾ ॥

I am nothing, I have nothing, and nothing belongs to me.

ਅਉਸਰ ਲਜਾ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹ ਸਧਨਾ ਜਨ ਤੇਰਾ ॥4॥1॥

Now, protect my honor; Sadhana is Your humble servant. ||4||1||

Bani Of Bhagat Sadhna

This one Shabad of Bhagat Sadhna in the holy Guru Granth Sahib is written in the Bilawal Raga; it is prayer to God to protect the honour of His devotees. In the SGGS on Page 858:

ਬਾਣੀ ਸਧਨੇ ਕੀ ਰਾਗ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ॥ ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

banee saDhnay kee raag bilaaval: ik-oNkaar satgur parsaad.

The Word Of Sadhana, Raag Bilaaval: One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

ਨਰਿਪ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਇਕ ਭਇਆ ਭੇਖਧਾਰੀ ॥ ਕਾਮਾਰਥੀ ਸਆਰਥੀ ਵਾ ਕੀ

ਪੈਜ ਸਵਾਰੀ ॥੧॥

nrip kanniaa kay kaarnai ik bha-i-aa bhaykh-Dhaaree. kaamaarathee su-aarthee vaa kee paij savaaree. ||1||

For a king's daughter (Buddhi=Intellect), a soul disguised himself in body. The soul who became Self Willed and selfish , is protected by lord. ||1||

ਤਵ ਗਨ ਕਹਾ ਜਗਤ ਗਰਾ ਜਉ ਕਰਮ ਨ ਨਾਸੈ ॥ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨ ਕਤ ਜਾਈਝ ਜਉ

ਜੰਬਕ ਗਰਾਸੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

tav gun kahaa jagat guraa ja-o karam na naasai. singh saran kat jaa-ee-ai ja-o jaNbuk garaasai. ||1|| rahaa-o. What is Your value, O Jagat Gura(Carier of World's Wisdom i.e Supreme) if You will not my actions(Karma)? Why seek safety from a lion, if one is to be eaten by a jackal? ||1||Pause||

ਝਕ ਬੂੰਦ ਜਲ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਚਾਤਰਿਕ□ ਦਖ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਪਰਾਨ ਗਝ ਸਾਗਰ ਮਿਲੈ ਫਨਿ

ਕਾਮਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥੨॥

ayk boond jal kaarnay chaatrik dukh paavai. paraan gay saagar milai fun kaam na aavai. ||2||

For the sake of a single rain-drop, the rainbird suffers in pain. When its breath of life is gone, even an ocean is of no use to it. ||2||

ਪਰਾਨ ਜ ਥਾਕੇ ਬਿਰ ਨਹੀ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਿਰਮਾਵਉ ॥ ਬੂਡਿ ਮੂਝ ਨਉਕਾ ਮਿਲੈ ਕਹ ਕਾਹਿ
ਚਢਾਵਉ ॥੩॥

paraan jo thaakay thir nahee kaisay birmaava-o. bood
moo-ay na-ukaa milai kaho kaahi chadhaava-o. ||3||
Now, my life has grown weary, and I shall not last much
longer; how can I be patient? If I drown and die, and
then a boat comes along, tell me, how shall I climb
aboard? ||3||



Mausoleum of Bhagat Sadhna, Inner View

ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛ ਹਉ ਨਹੀ ਕਿਛ ਆਹਿ ਨ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਅਉਸਰ ਲਜਾ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹ ਸਧਨਾ
ਜਨ ਤੇਰਾ ॥੪॥੧॥

mai naahee kachh ha-o nahee kichh aahi na moraa. a-
osar lajaa raakh layho saDhnaa jan toraa. ||4||1||
I(Mann) am nothing, I(Chitt) have nothing, and nothing
belongs to me(Vanish Ego). Now, protect my honor;
Sadhana is Your Knower. ||4||1||

There is also a reference to Bhagat Sadhana together with
several other Bhagats in the SGGS on page 1106:

ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਕਬੀਰ ਤਿਲੋਚਨ ਸਧਨਾ ਸੈਨ ਤਰੈ ॥ ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਸਨਹ ਰੇ ਸੰਤਹ ਰਹਿ
ਜੀਉ ਤੇ ਸਭੈ ਸਰੈ ॥੨॥੧॥

naamdayv kabeer tilochan saDhnaa sain tarai. kahi
ravidaas sunhu ray santahu har jee-o tay sabhai sarai.
||2||1||

Naam Dayv, Kabeer, Trilochan, Sadhana and Sain
crossed over. Says Ravi Daas, listen, O Saints, through
the Dear Lord, all is accomplished. ||2||1||

Memorial

The Mosque of Sadhana Kasai is situated in north-west of the Sirhind-Ropar Railway Line, with railway line. The entire mosque is built of Sirhindi bricks. The paintings in the mosque represent the 'T' art form.

Bhagat Sain ji



SAIN, whose one hymn has been included in the Guru Granth Sāhib, is counted among the disciples of Rāmānand (1300-1411). Guru Arjan, Nānak V, says in one of his hymns in the Holy Book that the name of Sain was a household word as a bhakta of rare devotion (GG,487). In another, hymn, he refers to him as an example of dedication to the service of holymen. Bhakta Ravidās in a sabda in the Guru Granth Sāhib ranks Sain with Nāmdev, Kabir, Trilochan and Sadhnā in piety (GU. 1106). According to Bhāi Gurdās, Sain was the disciple of Rāmānand and he had adopted him as his preceptor on hearing of the fame of Kabir (1398-1518) who, too, was Rāmānand's disciple. All accounts agree that Sain was a barber, some stating that he served at the court of the king of Revā, then called Bāndhavgarh, in Central India, while others hold that he was attached to the court of the ruler of Bidar in South India. Those supporting the South Indian tradition believe that Sain was a disciple of jñānadeva. What is the best āraṭi or form of adoration of the Lord is the theme of Sain's pada incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib. According to Sain singing of His praise and meditating on His Name constitute the highest worship. These alone will ferry one across the fearful ocean and bring him liberation.

There are two varying accounts of bhagat Sain's life. Some people hold that he was an employee of the ruler of Bidar and a faithful devotee of Saint Gyaneshwar. But according to the popular tradition he was a barber who served as a personal attendant under Raja Ram, the ruler of Bandhawgadh.

Bhai Gurdas, who regards him as a follower of Gosai Ramanand says that under Kabir's influence, Sain the barber became a bhagat. His nights were consecrated to a loving adoration of the Lord while the days were devoted to the humdrum duties at the King's darbar. Bhagat Sain has been classified with the other greater bhagats in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib,

*With thy grace, O Lord I were redeemed
Namdeva, Kabir and Trilochan
As were Sadhna and Sain.
Guru Arjan writes,
Jaidev has abandoned ego,
And, Sain, the barber, has been redeemed by serving the
Lord.*

Deeply interested in bhagati, Sain was always found in the company of the holy. Once a member of sadhus gathered together and went on reciting kirtan throughout the night, thus preventing Sain from attending to his work. Next morning when he went to the Raja and apologise for his absence from duty. The Raja remarked that he had done his job well. Sain was overwhelmed with gratitude that God came to his rescue. The Raja realised that he had reached to such a elevated stage that God had sent someone else in place. Thus the Raja and his entire family became the devotees of Sain.

Shabad by Bhagat Sain in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib

:

*With incense, lamps and ghee,
I offer this lamp-lit worship service.
I am a sacrifice to the Lord. || 1 ||
Hail to You, Lord, hail to You!
Again and again, hail to You, Lord King, Ruler of all! || 1
|| Pause ||
Sublime is the lamp, and pure is the wick.*

You are immaculate and pure, O Brilliant Lord of Wealth!
|| 2 ||
Raamaanand knows the devotional worship of the Lord.
He says that the Lord is all-pervading, the embodiment of
supreme joy. || 3 ||
The Lord of the world, of wondrous form,
has carried me across the terrifying world-ocean.
Says Sain, remember the Lord,
the embodiment of supreme joy!
(SGGS)

Bhagat Sain was a disciple of Bhagat Ramanand and consequently lived in the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century of the Christian era. He was a barber at the court of Raja Ram, king of Rewa, then called Bandhavgarh. The tendency of the age was towards devotion and religious composition, and Sain found leisure in the midst of duties to study the hymns of Ramanand, shape his life on the principles inculcated in them, and successfully imitate their spirit and devotional fervour.

The accomplishments and duties of an Indian court barber at the time of Sain were and are still of a miscellaneous character. He is something of a surgeon and ordinarily a marriage or match-maker, he oils the king's body, shampoos his limbs, pares his nails, shaves his face and head, if he be a Hindu, and clips his moustaches, if he be a Musalman; amuses him with gossip and tales; often plays the rebeck and sings his own compositions, which deftly combine flattery of his master with social satire or pleasantry.

God is said by the Hindu chronicler to have cherished Sain as a cow her calf. He frequented the society of holy men and was very happy in their company. He performed for them all menial offices, for he believed that serving saints was equivalent to serving God himself.

The Bhagat Mal contains a legend which at once illustrates Sain's devotion to saints and the estimation in which he was held for his piety. When going one day to perform his usual ministrations for King Raja Ram, he met some holy men on the

way. He thought it was his first duty to attend to them, He took them with him, and began to render them with the customary services. With the greatest mental satisfaction to himself he gave them consecrated and secular food to relieve their souls and bodies. In thus acting Sain disregarded his duty to the king and braved his displeasure.

The legend states that a holy man, by God's favour, in order to avert the king's wrath and save Sain from punishment, assumed his appearance, and having gone and performed the customary duties for the king, took his departure. Soon after Sain arrived and began to apologise for the delay. The king said, "Thou hast only just gone after the usual services to me; why apologise?" Sain replied, " I have not been here. Perhaps thy majesty sayest so to excuse my absence." The Raja then knew that a special providence had intervened and performed for him the usual tonsorial duties. He was at once converted, fell at Sain's feet, worshipped him as his guru, and thus sought an asylum in God. It had at any rate at the time of the composition of the Bhagat Mal become an established custom that the successive kings of the house of Bandhavgarh should always be disciples of the descendants of Sain. They are now said to be followers of Bhagat Kabir.

Having made an oblation of incense, lamp, and clarified butter,

I go to offer to Thee, O God.

Hail to Thee, O God, hail!

Ever hail to Thee, O Sovereign God!

Thy name is the best lamp, meditation thereon the purest wick;

Thou art alone the Bright One, O God.

It is the saints of God who feel divine pleasure;

They describe Thee as all-pervading and the Supreme Joy.

Thou, of fascinating form, O God, float us over the ocean of terror.

Sain saith, worship the Supreme Joy.

"Lord Himself bestows honour on His devotees."

There is no denying the fact that the pure and pious souls influence mankind irrespective of the barriers of any kind. The kings make special efforts to get their history written but

because of the precious deeds and altruistic words of the personages saturated in the love of God, new history is compiled daily in praise of them although it may not be possible to ascertain the exact date or year and place of their birth so as to confirm to the definition of history. Keeping their multi-faceted greatness in view, everybody feels proud in linking that personality to himself or considers himself blessed by linking himself with him. This has been the case with several contributors to the Sikh Scripture. Bhagat Sain is one such person. According to some scholars, Sain who was born in 1390 AD, belonged to Karnataka. Their assumption is based on the evidence that Sain was once in the service of the king of Bidar, a town in Karnataka. Some others opine that Sain remained for most of his life in the service of the King of Bandhavgarh in Rajasthan and thus conclude that he might have belonged to Rajasthan. Apart from these two schools of thought, there is another view which believes Sain to be a Panjabi. According to this view, Sain was born in the early morning of the full-moon day of Maghar in 1343 AD in the village of Sohal, in Amritsar district. His father's name was Baba Mukand Rai and mother's Jiwan. When he came of age, he went over to Lahore to stay with his aunt (father's sister). Sain married Sulakhani of Jalkhar, and led a householder's life. They had only one son born to them.

Later on, they migrated to Delhi from where he went into the service of a king of Rajasthan. It was during his stay there that he received spiritual enlightenment. Maybe, the above given facts are not unadulterated history, but this proves beyond doubt that the fame of Sain had reached beyond Panjab up to Rajasthan and Karnataka, but his links with Panjab are well established. Even now there stands a Gurdwara and a water reservoir in the village of Sohal Thathian to commemorate his memory. It is also said that Sain himself inaugurated the digging of this reservoir on the bank of which he used to spend long hours in meditation. Panjab Govt officially celebrated his 654th birthday on 6.12.1997 in this village itself.

The biography of Sain as it emerges from the historically authentic evidences is narrated below:

In the only hymn of Sain that appears in the Guru Granth Sahib (P.695) under Dhanasri measure, he says with genuine

pride that only his spiritual mentor Bhagat Ramanand knows the way to Naam-simran, (meditation of Name) and he perceives God as all-pervasive and immensely benevolent. Thus, it becomes obvious that Sain was disciple of Ramanand of Prayag who has been acknowledged the founder-preacher of the Bhakti movement in Northern India. Bhai Gurdas (Varan, X. 16) says that after Kabir, Sain was the second important disciple of Ramanand. Herein Bhai Gurdas gives ample information about him which can be summed up as follows:

After Kabir who enjoyed great name and fame, another person from the so-called low castes to rise to spiritual heights was Sain, a barber by birth, He used to remain absorbed in Divine Name at night and visit early morning to the royal palace to massage the king's body so as to cure it of various physical maladies. One day he had some guests and he remained occupied all the night in Kirtan or singing of Divine eulogy. Thus service of the saints and the Sangat made him miss his duty at the palace to serve the king. Realizing the intensity of his love for the saints and the Sangat, God Himself adopted Sain's form and went over to the palace and served the king. Consequently, the malady of the king was cured. On the other hand Sain, after he got free from his guests, went to the king with utter humility so as to seek forgiveness for his absence. The king saw from afar Sain approaching, an(calling him to his presence the king removed his cloak and put it on him as a token of his pleasure. He further told Sain that the way he massaged him last time had really captivated him. All his ailments have vanished. This was heard by the entire mankind. In this way God Himself intervened to prove the greatness of his devotee. Now let us see what Guru Arjan Dev has said in this connection in one of his hymns:

His devotees, tasks has the Lord Himself
undertaken to fulfil;

These Himself has the Lord come to accomplish SGGS-783

Referring to the incident related above, Bhai Gurdas says.
Learning of the name earned by Kabir,
Another Sikh, who came on the scene was Sain, the
barber.

He performed loving devotion at night
and went to the king's court in the morn.
Once many saint-guests came

and Kirtan went on all the night.
He could not leave his saint guests,
and thus tailed to do duty at the king's.
Lord Himself took Sain's form
and entertained the king.
After bidding farewell to all his guests,
Sain reached the king with diffidence.
The king called him from afar,
and summoning near bestowed robes.
You have captivated me,
said the king and numberless people heard this.
Lord Himself bestows honour on His devotees.

When the king heard from Sain's own lips the account of his absence, he thought very highly of the spiritual greatness of the saint. He was so impressed that he, along with his family, became disciples of Sain. Guru Arjan Dev has in a hymn reiterated such a view :

One that is lowly without a name,
By contemplation of the Name in all
four corners becomes revered.
Beloved! Thy sight I seek: Pray grant it
Numberless by Thy devotion are saved. SGGS- 386

The above incident in Sain's life made his faith in God more intense and firm: it is inexpressible in words. From then onward Sain was always absorbed in the meditation of the Divine and sang songs in Praise of God who provides joys to all.

It was perhaps keeping this episode in view that Ravidas has written about Sain and other saints like him. He said that God is capable of doing whatever he wishes.

Namdev, Kabir, Trilochan, Sadhna, Sain-all are saved.
Saith Ravidas ; Listen ! devotees of God!
All within the Lord's power lies. SGGS-1106

One more point becomes clear from the verse as quoted above: Ravidas was either a contemporary of Sain or was well familiar with his name and fame.

Guru Arjan Dev had composed a hymn in Basant measure wherein the Guru refers to Jaidev's egoity and then his

discarding of it. Herein he also said that Sain had adopted the profession of a barber to earn his livelihood. Writing of his fame, the Guru says in a verse as follows:

Sain, the barber, was running errands,
as known to all:
The Lord in his heart taking abode,
among the saints found he mention. SGGS-487

This implies that Sain who did various odd jobs in the village had become very famous. The Guru felt it proper that a person's status should not be determined from one's profession or from the family in which he was born. Rather his deeds should determine his status in society. That is why he says about Namdev: God pushed the Brahmins and Khatri away, and instead embraced a calico printer as His son. Any profession is pious if it is marked by honesty and righteousness.

The hymn of Sain as included, in the Sikh Scripture is given below:

Making devotion the incense, lamp and ghee for aarti,
To the Lord am I a sacrifice.
Sing you paeans of Divine joy:
Sing ever paeans of glory of the Divine king. (Pause)
Lord! realization that Thou art immaculate,
Is for me the noble lamp and the holy wick.
The way of Divine devotion is known to
my master, Ramanand,
Who expounds the Supreme Bliss,
perfection incarnate.
Lord of charming figure ! across the
ocean of existence take me.
Saith Sain : To the Master of Supreme Bliss
be you devoted SGGS-695

This hymn could be summed up as follows : I am sacrifice unto them who are ever absorbed in the aarti of the supreme Lord (In fact the true aarti of God cannot be performed with the help of lamp and incense, rather it is possible only with one's firm faith and deep love for Him.) O God, it is only Thy devotees who recognize You, remember You, and sing Your praises. So please bless me with Thy grace so that I am also able to swim across this world-ocean.

Bhagat Sain spent his entire life in the name of God and ultimately breathed his last in AD 1440 at the age of 50. His followers have been anxious even today to follow in his footsteps and thus make a success of their life by devoting themselves to singing eulogies of the Lord.

Saith Nanak God's devotees hunger to perform

Divine laudation :

The Name Eternal their prop.

Day and night in Joy they abide;

Of these bearing noble qualities

dust of feet they make themselves. -Guru Nanak SGGS-466

Another Article on Bhagat Sain Ji

There is no denying the fact that the pure and pious souls influence mankind irrespective of the barriers of any kind. The kings make special efforts to get their history written but because of the precious deeds and altruistic words of the personages saturated in the love of God, new history is compiled daily in praise of them although it may not be possible to ascertain the exact date or year and place of their birth so as to confirm to the definition of history. Keeping their multi-faceted greatness in view, everybody feels proud in linking that personality to himself or considers himself blessed by linking himself with him. This has been the case with several contributors to the Sikh Scripture. Bhagat Sain is one such person.

Life

According to some scholars, Sain who was born in 1390 AD, belonged to Karnataka. Their assumption is based on the evidence that Sain was once in the service of the king of Bidar, a town in Karnataka. Some others opine that Sain remained for most of his life in the service of the King of Bandhavgarh in Rajasthan and thus conclude that he might have belonged to Rajasthan. Apart from these two schools of thought, there is another view which believes Sain to be a Punjabi. According to this view, Sain was born in the early morning of the full-moon

day of Maghar in 1343 AD in the village of Sohal Thati, in Amritsar district. His father's name was Baba Mukand Rai and mother's Jiwan. When he came of age, he went over to Lahore to stay with his aunt (father's sister). Sain married Sulakhani of Jalkhar, and led a householder's life. They had only one son born to them.



Bhagat Sain

Later on, they migrated to Delhi from where he went into the service of a king of Rajasthan. It was during his stay there that he received spiritual enlightenment. Maybe, the above given facts are not unadulterated history, but this proves beyond doubt that the fame of Sain had reached beyond Punjab up to Rajasthan and Karnataka, but his links with Panjab are well established. Even now there stands a Gurdwara and a water reservoir in the village of Sohal Thathian to commemorate his memory. It is also said that Sain himself inaugurated the digging of this reservoir on the bank of which he used to spend long hours in meditation. Panjab Govt officially celebrated his 654th birthday on 6.12.1997 in this village itself.

Bhagat Sain, whose one hymn has been included in the Guru Granth Sāhib, is counted among the disciples of Bhagat

Rāmānand. Guru Arjan, Nānak V, says in one of his hymns in the Holy Book that the name of Sain was a household word as a bhakta of rare devotion (GG,487). In another, hymn, he refers to him as an example of dedication to the service of holy men. Bhagat Sain was not interested in study so his father sent him to Aunt Sobhi at Lahore. He learnt work of barber at Lahore from Ustad Azeem (barber). Bhagat Sain was married to Sahib Devi and returned home. He had a son whose name was Baba Nayi.

Bhagat Ravi Dās in a sabada in the Guru Granth Sāhib ranks Sain with Nāmdev, Kabir, Trilochan and Sadhnā in piety (GU. 1106). According to Bhāi Gurdās, Sain was the disciple of Rāmānand and he had adopted him as his preceptor on hearing of the fame of Kabir (1398-1518) who, too, was Rāmānand's disciple. All accounts agree that Sain was a barber, some stating that he served at the court of the King of Revā, then called Bāndhavgarh, in Central India, while others hold that he was attached to the court of the ruler of Bidar in South India. Those supporting the South Indian tradition believe that Sain was a disciple of Jānadeva. What is the best ārati or form of adoration of the Lord is the theme of Sain's pada incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib. According to Sain the singing of God's praise and meditating on God's name constitutes the highest worship. These alone will ferry one across the fearful ocean and bring him liberation.

There are two varying accounts of bhagat Sain's life. Some people hold that he was an employee of the ruler of Bidar and a faithful devotee of Gyaneshwar. But according to the popular tradition he was a barber who served as a personal attendant under Raja Ram, the ruler of Bandhawgadh. His nights were consecrated to a loving adoration of the Lord while the days were devoted to the humdrum duties at the King's darbar.

Disciple

The tendency of the age was towards devotion and religious composition, and Sain found leisure in the midst of duties to study the hymns of Ramanand, shape his life on the principles inculcated in them, and successfully imitate their spirit and devotional fervour.

Acc. to Nabha Das Bhagatmal (1575), Bhagat Sain was one of 12 renowned disciples of Ramanand. His other Disciples were Kabir, Ravidas, Dhanna, Pipa, Bhabanand, Sursura, Sukha, Tulsidas etc.

Other sources from Sri Sain Temple, Batala also says so that Bhagat Sain was a disciple of Bhagat Ramanand and guided him to the true way of the lord.

Service of a King

Once there was a drought in Punjab so Bhagat Sain went to Delhi with his family, to Diwan Sohan Lal. From there he was sent to serve a king who was suffering from the frailties of human health.

The Bhagat Mal contains a legend which illustrates Sain's devotion to bhagats and the estimation in which he was held for his piety. When going one day to perform his usual ministrations for King Raja Ram, he met some holy men on the way. He thought it was his first duty to attend to them, He took them with him, and began to render them with the customary services. With the greatest mental satisfaction to himself he gave them consecrated and secular food to relieve their souls and bodies. In thus acting Sain disregarded his duty to the king and braved his displeasure.

The legend states that a holy man, by God's favour, in order to avert the king's wrath and save Sain from punishment, assumed his appearance, and having gone and performed the customary duties for the king, took his departure. Soon after Sain arrived and began to apologise for the delay. The king said, "Thou hast only just gone after the usual services to me; why apologise?" Sain replied, "I have not been here. Perhaps thy majesty sayest so to excuse my absence." The Raja then knew that a special providence had intervened and performed for the usual duties.

It had at any rate at the time of the composition of the Bhagat Mal become an established custom that the successive kings of the house of Bandhavgarh should always be disciples of

the descendants of Sain. They are now said to be followers of Bhagat Kabir.

With thy grace, O Lord I were redeemed
Namdeva, Kabir and Trilochan
As were Sadhna and Sain.
Guru Arjan writes,
Jaidev has abandoned ego,
And, Sain, the barber, has been redeemed by serving
the Lord.

The accomplishments and duties of an Indian court barber at the time of Sain were and are still of a miscellaneous character. He is something of a surgeon and ordinarily a marriage or match-maker, he oils the king's body, shampoos his limbs, pares his nails, shaves his face and head, if he be a Hindu, and clips his moustaches, if he be a Musalman; amuses him with gossip and tales; often plays the rebeck and sings his own compositions, which deftly combine flattery of his master with social satire or pleasantry.

God is said by the hindu chronicler to have cherished Sian as a cow her calf. He frequented the society of holy men and was very happy in their company. He performed for them all menial offices, for he believed that serving bhagats was equivalent to serving God himself.

In this way God Himself intervened to prove the greatness of his devotee. Now let us see what Guru Arjan Sahib has said in this connection in one of his hymns:

His devotees, tasks has the Lord Himself
undertaken to fulfil;
These Himself has the Lord come to accomplish. (Page
783, SGGS)

Referring to the incident related above, Bhai Gurdas says.

Learning of the name earned by Kabir,
Another Sikh, who came on the scene was Sain, the
barber.
He performed loving devotion at night
and went to the king's court in the morn.
Once many bhagat-guests came

and Kirtan went on all the night.
He could not leave his bhagat guests,
and thus tailed to do duty at the king's.
Lord Himself took Sain's form
and entertained the king.
After bidding farewell to all his guests,
Sain reached the king with diffidence.
The king called him from afar,
and summoning near bestowed robes.
You have captivated me,
said the king and numberless people heard this.
Lord Himself bestows honour on His devotees.

When the king heard from Sain's own lips the account of his absence, he thought very highly of the spiritual greatness of the bhagat. He was so impressed that he, along with his family, became disciples of Sain. Guru Arjan Sahib has in a hymn reiterated such a view :

One that is lowly without a name,
By contemplation of the Name in all
four corners becomes revered.
Beloved! Thy sight I seek: Pray grant it
Numberless by Thy devotion are saved.(Page 386,
SGGS)

The above incident in Sain's life made his faith in God more intense and firm: it is inexpressible in words. From then onward Sain was always absorbed in the meditation of the Divine and sang songs in Praise of God who provides joys to all.

It was perhaps keeping this episode in view that Ravi Das has written about Sain and other bhagats like him. He said that God is capable of doing whatever he wishes.

Namdev, Kabir, Trilochan, Sadhna, Sain-all are saved.
Saith Ravidas ; Listen ! devotees of God!
All within the Lord's power lies. (Page 1106, SGGS)

One more point becomes clear from the verse as quoted above: Ravidas was either a contemporary of Sain or was well familiar with his name and fame.

Guru Arjan Sahib had composed a hymn in Basant measure wherein the Guru refers to Jaidev's egoity and then his discarding of it. Herein he also said that Sain had adopted the profession of a barber to earn his livelihood. Writing of his fame, the Guru says in a verse as follows:

Sain, the barber, was running errands,
as known to all:
The Lord in his heart taking abode,
among the bhagats found he mention. (Page 487, SGGS)

This implies that Sain who did various odd jobs in the village had become very famous. The Guru felt it proper that a person's status should not be determined from one's profession or from the family in which he was born. Rather his deeds should determine his status in society. That is why he says about Namdev: God pushed the Brahmins and Khatri away, and instead embraced a calico printer as his son. Any profession is pious if it is marked by honesty and righteousness.

Bhagat Sain spent his entire life in the name of God and ultimately breathed his last at the approx. age of 50. His followers have been anxious even today to follow in his footsteps and thus make a success of their life by devoting themselves to singing eulogies of the Lord.

Bhagat Sain had many disciples from low and upper caste. One famous disciple was Brahmin Kordass. Bhagat Sain gave him namdan and explained the true way of life. Kordass made contributions in ending the false systems, like caste and untouchability.

Joti Jot

During last days of his life he spend with his friends Dhanna, sadhna, pipa. During his end time he called his son Bhagat nai to kashi and tell him to stay here for last time, to which he replied that he could not stay their for life time as he is worldly person. Bhagat Sain died in Samat at Kashi. Bhai Nai lived in Kashi for a year and returned to Punjab.

Main Themes Of Bhagat Sain's Bani

1) God is Supreme Joy

- 2) We should thank god for providing joy, happiness and wealth
- 3) Guru Is the source from where we can learn how to get the god (ਰਾਮਾ ਭਗਤਿ ਰਾਮਾਨੰਦ ਜਾਨੈ ॥)

Bhagat Surdas ji



SURDAS, one of the medieval Indian bhakta poets whose verses have been incorporated in the Guru Granth Sāhib. Sūrdās, whose original name was Madan Mohan, is said to have been born in 1529, in a high-ranking Brāhman family. As he grew up, he gained proficiency in the arts of music and poetry for which he had a natural talent. He soon became a celebrated poet, singing with deep passion lyrics of Divine love. He attracted the attention of Emperor Akbar who appointed him governor of the parganah of Sandilā. But Sūrdās' heart lay elsewhere. He renounced the world and took to the company of holy men dedicating himself solely to the Lord. He died at Banāras. A shrine in the vicinity of the city honours his memory.

The Guru Granth Sahib contains one hymn by Bhakta Sūrdās, in the Sāraṅg measure. In fact, it is not a complete hymn but a single line: "O mind, abandon the company of those who turn away from God." It is believed to be the refrain of a complete hymn composed by Sūrdās in which he described one who had turned away from God as an incorrigible sinner for whom there was no hope of redemption. Guru Arjan omitted the rest of the hymn probably because it ran counter to the Sikh belief in God's grace even for the worst of sinners. He therefore composed a hymn to explain and supplement the single line of Sūrdās. Its refrain is : "Men of God abide with the Lord."

Surdàs whose verse figures in the Guru Granth Sāhib is to be differentiated from the blind poet of the same name who wrote Sūr Sagar.

Bhagat Surdas Ji is an example of this very principle. Bhagat Surdas only has one line in Guru Granth Sahib. He provides the following revelation.

shhaadd man har bimukhan ko sa(n)g ||

O mind, do not even associate with those who have turned their backs on the Lord.

To this Guru Arjan Dev Ji composed a Shabad in Bhagat Surdas Jis name. Guru Ji writes.

saara(n)g mehalaa 5 sooradhaas ||

Saarang, Fifth Mehl, Sur Daas:

ik oa(n)kaar sathigur prasaadh ||

One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:

har kae sa(n)g basae har lok ||

The people of the Lord dwell with the Lord.

than man arap sarabas sabh arapiou anadh sehaj dhhun jhok ||1|| rehaao ||

They dedicate their minds and bodies to Him; they dedicate everything to Him. They are intoxicated with the celestial melody of intuitive ecstasy. ||1||Pause||

dharasan paekh bheae nirabikhee paaeae hai sagalae thhok ||

Gazing upon the Blessed Vision of the Lord's Darshan, they are cleansed of corruption. They obtain absolutely everything.

aan basath sio kaaj n kashhooai su(n)dhar badhan alok ||1||

They have nothing to do with anything else; they gaze on the beauteous Face of God. ||1||

siaam su(n)dhar thaj aan j chaahath jio kusattee than jok ||

But one who forsakes the elegantly beautiful Lord, and harbors desire for anything else, is like a leech on the body of a leper.

sooradhaas man prabh hathh leeno dheeno eihu paralok ||2||1||8||

Says Sur Daas, God has taken my mind in His Hands. He
has blessed me with the world beyond. ||2||1||8||
O man abandon thou the association of those turned away
from God. SGGS-1253

Bhagat Surdas, whose earlier name was Madan Mohan, was born in 1586 Samvat 1529 AD in a Brahmin family of Kashi, the known Hindu centre of spiritual learning those days. His father's name was pandit Ravidas. According to some other scholars, he was born in a village near Delhi. Besides having proficiency in Sanskrit, Persian and Sadh Bhasha (Language used by saints), he was a musicologist as well. Emperor Akbar was so impressed by his multi-faceted achievements that he appointed him the governor of Sandila, which is in the region of Avadh. Here his main responsibility was to collect revenue and transmit it to the government in Delhi, besides maintaining law and order. Since his heart was oriented towards Divine Name, he continued to utter, like Guru Nanak did during the days he functioned as keeper of stores at Sultanpur Lodhi, "tera, tera (yours, yours). So whatever he saw around seemed to him only His manifestation. He opened the doors of his official treasure to meet the requirements of the poor and the needy. Such deeds of nobility and altruism earned him kudos all around, but this was not liked by many who nurtured jealousy towards him. They complained to emperor Akbar that Surdas has squandered the royal treasure. As this news reached Surdas, he acquitted himself of his responsibilities as a ruler and devoted himself more intensely and deeply to the devotion of Absolute One. The emperor was aware of this peculiar trait of his saintly temper, so he requested him to take his charge again. But he declined the offer saying that henceforth he would serve the Lord alone. According to him so long as one does not surrender to God completely-in the form of his body, mind and wealth-it is not possible for him to achieve mystical oneness with Him. A sort of distance remains between the two, and this is more than death for a devotee.

Only a single verse of Surdas is found included in the Guru Granth Sahib under Sarang measure, on page 1253. It reads as follows,

Myself! leave company of those
turned away from God SGGS-1253

It means: O man, give up the company of those persons who are not oriented towards God, because they are atheists, and have no faith in Him and the company of such self-centred people would bring no use. Gurbani hymns appearing on page 66 and 755 of SGGS endorse the viewpoint of Bhagat Surdas:

The egoists stand and lose all sap,

Bereft of shade and fruit: Spurn the company of such.

They neither have home nor habitation SGGS-66

And :-

Egoists are of minds loveless,

foul and hardened :

Like serpents fed on milk,

Are they full of poison within. SGGS-755

According to the Mahan Kosh (A Panjabi dictionary), two hymns by Surdas are there in the Guru Granth Sahib, but this statement does not seem to be correct because the second Hymn, on the same page of the Holy Book, is by Guru Arjan written in the name of Surdas. In this latter hymn, the seeker has been advised as to how to give up the company of the Manmukh (self-willed). It also teaches that man should try to achieve oneness with the Lord. One should surrender oneself completely before God and then try to seek out all joys from the glimpse of the Divine. In sum it can be said that the Guru has supplemented in his hymn what Surdas has hinted at in the preceding verse.

No authentic historical evidence is available to specify the date or year of his death. However, a memorial tomb is built at Kashi which the devotees visit to offer their respect and reverence for this holy man.

Saturated in devotion was Surdas Intoxicated with Name
was Surdas

Another Article on Bhagat Surdas Ji

Bhagat Surdas, was a poet, sant, musician and Gurmukh, who is believed to have lived from 1483 to 1573. He is said to have been blind from birth. He is traditionally believed to have

lived from 1483 to 1573, and to have lived in Vrindavan, near Mathura.

A devotee of God, Bhagat Surdas was a follower of Gurmat Philosophy. He was another influential Bhagat in the Bhagti Movement of South Asia. A line by Bhagat Surdas has been incorporated into the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Many argue that some shabads in Guru Granth Sahib are of more importance than others. However, an important understanding one must have is that no shabad is greater than the other. Everything in Guru Granth Sahib has been compiled together to bring an understanding and a dialogue with the Eternal so that we may understand the 'True' essence of Ek Onkar (The One all existing forever continually creating Lord). Bhagat Surdas Ji line is an example of this very principle. In the Adi Granth, Guru Arjan Sahib explored Bhagat Surdas's writing under the title of Surdas in Raga Sarang.

Surdas Bani and Explanations

Bhagat Surdas has only one line in the Guru Granth Sahib. He provides the following revelation:

ਛਾਡਿ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਮਖਨ ਕੇ ਸੰਗ ॥

shhaadd man hari bimukhan ko sa(n)g ||

O mind, do not even associate with those who have turned their backs on the Lord Hari.

This single line is the Philosophy of Gurmat:

ਛਾਡਿ: Leave

ਮਨ: O Soul

ਹਰਿ: Inner Soul (when he haven't searched for inner soul), God (When he have searched his inner soul though, he is waiting for Command of God)

ਬਿਮਖਨ : Turned Backs

ਕੇ ਸੰਗ: Company

Devotee Surdas is speaking to his Mind (Mann).

If a person has no knowledge of Gurmat, then his 'anatomy' is:

- The Nature of his Mann is to remain tangled in Maya.
- The Nature of his Mann is to earn more and more money more than necessary, forgetting God.
- The Nature of his Mann is to wait and watch, hoping some God will come before him that he can see with his naked eyes.
- The Nature of his Mann is to take up other rights for himself.
- The Nature of his Mann is to have attachment with family more than is required.

If a person has the Knowledge of Gurmat and still he is not following it, then he is nothing more than a Mukh Gyani.

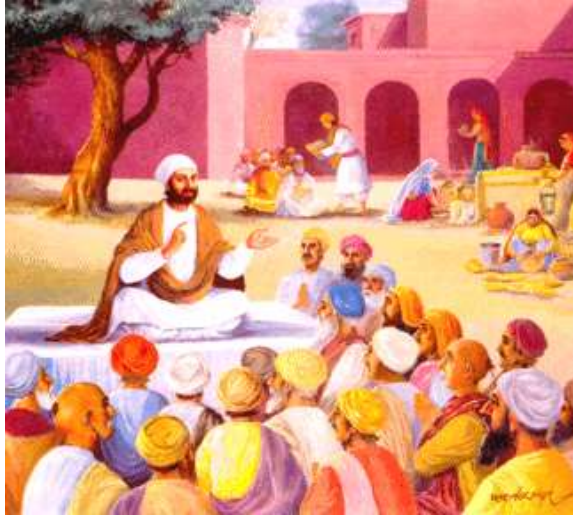
Bemukhan are those people who tangle a person by teaching wrong methodologies and philosophy that, a soul could not think of his own and God. Those people have turned their backs from God and Gurmat. All Disbelievers come in this category, All Bharam Gyani, Fake Believers and Fake Saints comes in this category. Even person's own attention if is not inside too comes in this category.

Devotee Surdas is saying, O! My Mind (Attention), don't follow the people, don't follow such religions, don't follow such ways which have turned their back to lord, Who do not know what their inner soul is who do not know why they born to earth. If you are in their company than leave company of those people. because such company will spoil your life and you have to come again and again on earth and Gurbani says it's difficult to get Human Body because the intellectual level and knowledge gaining level which a human have is not available in any other Organism.

So Leave the Company of Darkness and Have company with the Light, the people who can teach you Gurmat; people who are Gurmukhs. Even find and listen to (your) inner soul, if you can not listen to your inner soul then you are Bemukhan as well.

Bhagat Trilochan ji

**"O Dear Lord, You, Yourself know everything;
so prays Trilochan, Lord."**



Sheikh Farid breathed his last in 1266AD & a year after in 1267AD, was born in the state of Maharashtra another devotee of God by the name of Trilochan. The hymns he composed later in his life lead a person on the path of spirituality through varied precepts. Guru Arjan Dev ji included these hymns in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, making them a part of Shabad-Guru.

Trilochan was born in the village Barsi, near the town of Sholapur in the Maharashtra state, though some scholars hold the view that he was born in Uttar Pradesh & that there was a Marathi influence on the language of his hymns in consequence of his prolonged stay in Maharashtra. Trilochan was a contemporary & close friend of Bhagat Namdev (1270-1330). Bhagat Trilochan observed that whenever he called on his friend Namdev, the latter always happened to be busy in one worldly affair or another. At last one day, Trilochan could not restrain himself and asked his friend that he always appeared occupied in worldly affairs, how did he find the time to remember the Lord? Namdev satisfied his friend's curiosity in a very convincing manner and told him that although his hands were engaged in worldly occupation, his mind was ever fixed on Him. For a

householder, this was the best way to remember/worship God. Trilochan felt rather satisfied & happy at this answer. As says Bhai Gurdas, in his Var: X.21, it was Namdev who introduced Trilochan to his Guru who showed him the way to the Lord.

Bhagat Trilochan Ji always gave more importance to Bhakti (love & devotion) in preference to selfish interests. He said that he who is always occupied with problems relating to wealth and property will never become happy. He always served the saints at his residence with the utmost dedication and humanity.

The exact place of birth is not known. Some historians claim its Barsi near Sholapur, Maharastra and others claim its Uttar Pradesh but spent most of his time in Maharastra. The fact that two slokas of Kabir constitute a dialogue between Nam Dev and Trilochan shows that these two saints were contemporaries.

There are 4 shabads by Bhagat Tirlochan in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. In these he has condemned superficial rituals and pretentious renunciation and stressed the holiness of the heart.



Shabad by Bhagat Tirlochan in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, where he tells the relationship between the thought pattern in the mind just before a person dies and the consequence.

At the very last moment,

*one who thinks of wealth, and dies in such thoughts,
shall be reincarnated over and over again, in the form of
serpents. || 1 ||*

*O sister, do not forget the Name of the Lord of the
Universe. || Pause ||*

*At the very last moment,
he who thinks of women, and dies in such thoughts,
shall be reincarnated over and over again as a prostitute.
|| 2 ||*

*At the very last moment,
one who thinks of his children, and dies in such thoughts,
shall be reincarnated over and over again as a pig. || 3 ||*

*At the very last moment,
one who thinks of mansions, and dies in such thoughts,
shall be reincarnated over and over again as a goblin. ||
4 ||*

*At the very last moment,
one who thinks of the Lord, and dies in such thoughts,
says Trilochan, that man shall be liberated;
the Lord shall abide in his heart. || 5 || 2 ||*

*Bhagat Tirlochan message in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib.
He shares with the Yogi's who practices renunciation and rituals;
all this will not make you realize the Lord. He also emphasize on
the importance of having a Guru, inner realisation and
meditation.*

*You have not cleansed the filth from within yourself,
although outwardly, you wear the dress of a renunciate.
In the heart-lotus of your self, you have not recognized
God -*

why have you become a Sannyasee? || 1 ||

*Deluded by doubt, O Jai Chand,
you have not realized the Lord, the embodiment of
supreme bliss. || 1 || Pause ||*

*You eat in each and every house, fattening your body;
you wear the patched coat and the ear-rings of the
beggar, for the sake of wealth. You apply the ashes of
cremation to your body,
but without a Guru, you have not found the essence of
reality. || 2 ||*

Why bother to chant your spells?

Why bother to practice austerities?

Why bother to churn water?

Meditate on the Lord of Nirvaanaa, who has created the 8.4 million species of beings. || 3 ||

Why bother to carry the water-pot, O saffron-robed Yogi?

Why bother to visit the sixty-eight holy places of pilgrimage?

Says Tirlochan, listen, mortal: you have no corn - what are you trying to thresh?

Bhagat Tirlochan shares with us in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib on humility, forgiveness, sweet speech and not to use harsh words.

What is that word, what is that virtue, and what is that magic mantra?

What are those clothes, which I can wear to captivate my Husband Lord? || 126 ||

Humility is the word, forgiveness is the virtue, and sweet speech is the magic mantra.

Wear these three robes, O sister, and you will captivate your Husband Lord. || 127 ||

If you are wise, be simple; if you are powerful, be weak; and

when there is nothing to share, then share with others.

How rare is one who known as such a devotee. || 128 ||

Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord and Master abides in all.

Do not break anyone's heart; these are all priceless jewels. || 129 ||

The minds of all are like precious jewels; to harm them is not good at all.

If you desire your Beloved, then do not break anyone's heart. || 130 ||

SGGS 1386

Trilochan, a name which literally means three-eyed, that is, seer of the present, past and future, was a celebrated saint of the Vaisya caste. His birth is said to have taken place in the year A.D 1267. He either lived at or visited Pandharpur in the Sholapur district of the Bombay presidency, and was a contemporary of Namdev, who mentioned or addressed him in his hymns. Inquiries at Pandharpur and the neighbouring city of

Barsi have, however, failed to furnish any information regarding Trilochan. The following legend passes for history among his admirers.

He had a perfect faith in and love for saints, but they visited him in inconveniently large numbers, and there were only he and his wife to attend and wait on them. He thought that they were not served as he could have wished, so he resolved on engaging a servant if he could find one who was accustomed to minister holy men. He continued to search for such an attendant, but not finding one became sad at heart. It is said that God was not pleased at the sorrow of his saint, and sent him a candidate for service. Trilochan asked the candidate who he was, whence he had come, and whether he had parents and a house and a home. The man replied that he had no parents and no home. He had merely come to be engaged as a servant. He could wait on the saints of God without assistance from others, as his life had been spent in such service. He gave his name as Antarjami, which interpreted means Searcher of hearts. Trilochan was highly pleased and ordered his wife to engage him and cheerfully supply all his wants. She was cautioned to consider his pleasure as her first duty.

Antarjami performed menial services for the saints, such as cooking, drawing water, washing their feet, shampooing and bathing them, in such a manner that Trilochan's house became famous for its hospitality; and a large crowd of saints began to live with him and consume his substance. Thirteen months passed in this way, until one day Trilochan's wife went to visit a female neighbour. The latter inquired why she was so dirty and looked so miserable. She replied that her lord had taken into his employ a servant who required so much attention that she had to spend all her days grinding corn and cooking for him. This was reported to Antarjami and he promptly disappeared.

When the time came to wait on the saints, Antarjami could not be found. Trilochan became very much grieved, and, rebuking his wife, told her that it was through her indiscretion Antarjami had left their service. When Trilochan's grief has lasted for three days it is said that he was comforted by divine interposition. He consequently applied himself to the praise and

contemplation of the one true God. His sorrow was then dispelled.

Another Article on Bhagat Trilochan Ji

Four hymns of Trilochan are extant in the Sikh Scripture. These hymns severely denounce the futility of rituals and observances, superstitions and sham austerity. He says that engaging in such activities is as futile as churning water. He emphasises the need of realising God. Human mind remains impure and full of evils like ego. The outer garb is of a mendicant, but the soul inside is impure and mind restless. Bhagat Trilochan considers such beings and fallen ones, as having gone astray. Such people are not even remotely related to God, rather they deceive themselves as well as others. A hymn by Trilochan sums up these views as follows:

You have not cleansed the filth from within yourself,
although outwardly, you wear the dress of a renunciate.
In the heart-lotus of your self, you have not recognized
God - why have you become a Sannyasee? ||1||
Deluded by doubt, O Jai Chand,
You have not realized the Lord, the embodiment of
supreme bliss. ||1||Pause||

Only a daring and unattached holy-man could make such an unabashed and emphatic comment which happened to satirise the contemporary social and religious set up. Bhagat Trilochan was one such saint who dared say so. In his hymn in the SGGS under Dhanasri measure, he addresses his wife, but subtly conveys a universal message:

"Deluded foolish woman! Why blame on God?" SGGS-Aang 695

His universal message was that God never does anything wrong and bad. Therefore, it is not proper for us to blame God for wrong-doings because pain and pleasure are the result of our own bad deeds and doings, both are cautioned against in Shabad-Guru ji. Trilochan tries to impress upon his wife the fact that one must face the consequence of one's deeds. The only

way to save one's self from them is to ever remember God with complete devotion. This can save one from all kinds of bondage. God's grace and remembrance are the only means to wash off Karmic effects. Another hymn by him, included in the SGGS; under Gujri measure, warns us of such effects:

At the very last moment, one who thinks of wealth, and
dies in such thoughts,
shall be reincarnated over and over again, in the form of
serpents. ||1||

Thus, he advises mankind not to remain engrossed throughout life in wealth, woman, son and land lest one should have all or any of these in one's consciousness all the time and especially at one's death. Mankind should perform their filial and social obligation in such a way that they never become forgetful of God. This will help them concentrate on the Divine Name as their end draws near. Only this can put an end to the process of their transmigration. The essence of the above hymn by Trilochan ji is to make a person aware of these awful species which could become their fate. Thus, every individual is exhorted to remember the Lord which is the only means of diverting mankind's sensibilities, given to sensuous pleasure and material comfort, towards the pious Name of God. This reminds human creature of the ultimate objective of life, ie, remembrance of God always.

Guru Arjan Sahib Ji has also pointed out the disgusting characteristics of attachment and material gains. He exhorts persons that have God-realisation as their ideal and live in the company of holy men (Saadh Sangat) to remain ever unaffected by and indifferent to the attachment of Moh and Maya (attachment and pursuit of material gain) Guru Ji states:

O emotional attachment, you are the invincible warrior of the battlefield of life; you totally crush and destroy even the most powerful.
You entice and fascinate even the heavenly heralds, celestial singers, gods, mortals, beasts and birds.

In sum, it can be said that Bhagat Trilochan ji has, with the help of some very apt historical and mythological allusions, shown a person the importance of the remembrance of the Divine Name with a pure heart. This is, instead of indulging in the in rituals and observances, which are as futile as churning water. He advises the mortal against over-indulgence in worldly, material attachments and achievements.